Resisting for Empire : Georges Bidault's New Vision of the Resistance for Algérie française, 1962-1965

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Georges Bidault's New Vision of the Resistance for *Algérie française*, 1962-1965

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INTRODUCTION

Against the Nazis, Against de Gaulle

Excavating Georges Bidault's Forgotten Re-Envisioning of the Resistance

On March 5, 1963, the BBC aired an interview on its weekly television program "Panorama" with a French politician named Georges Bidault. This was no ordinary political interview, and the road that had brought Bidault to this moment was a strange one. Once a hero of the Resistance and a successful political figure of post-World War II France, he had progressively marginalized himself through his staunch opposition to Algerian independence during the Algerian War. When this war for colonial liberation broke out in November 1954, Bidault had recently finished his most recent term as Minister of Foreign Affairs, and to all appearances he seemed set to remain a key player in French political life. But by the time of his BBC interview almost ten years later, he had been forced into exile, been stripped of his parliamentary immunity from prosecution, founded a new "National Council of Resistance," and been charged with conspiracy to assassinate the President of the Republic, General Charles de Gaulle.

During the "Panorama" interview—filmed at an undisclosed location with a blacked-out background—a BBC correspondent questioned Bidault about his political goals and the nature of his Council, whose goal it was to overthrow Charles de Gaulle as "president of the Republic" and ensure that Algeria remain a part of France. Bidault's answers were succinct and evasive; throughout the interview, he refused to divulge any details about what he was doing in France or how, precisely, his Resistance Council might find the necessary means and support to bring about regime change in France. Even so, he remained optimistic about his chances for success. He spoke through an interpreter for nearly the entire interview, but when the correspondent asked, "Monsieur Bidault, do you really think you have any chance of overthrowing De Gaulle?" Bidault chose to respond in English: "I think our chance is better than the chance of Churchill in 1940."[1] It was almost as though he had rehearsed the line and was waiting for the opportunity to use it.

[1] Unedited footage of an interview with Georges Bidault on the BBC program *Panorama*, March 5, 1963, in the Archives of the Institut national audiovisuelle (INA), AFE04004539 / 635079.

Indeed, the years of war, occupation, and resistance in France in the 1940s were frequently on Bidault's mind and the minds of many others during the Algerian War. Throughout this war of independence, references to the *années noires* or "black years"—to Nazi occupation, vichyist collaboration, and World War II in general—abounded. When the conflict broke out in Algeria in November 1954 with a series of targeted assassinations led by the FLN (*Front de Libération Nationale*, or National Liberation Front), France and Europe had put the Second World War behind them only nine years before. This conflict and the social transformations and tragedies it brought about in France remained fresh in the public memory. Actors of all stripes seized upon the language of occupation, collaboration, fascism, torture, resistance, and liberation to characterize the contemporary political situation and criticize their opponents. These practices were widespread and often generated significant confusion and disagreement, as actors on opposing sides of the conflict seized upon the same terms and ideas to express their positions and launch their polemics. Some state officials, for instance, equated the FLN to the Nazi party and drew parallels between acts of violence and torture committed by both.[2] On the other hand, when Charles de Gaulle returned to power following a political crisis in 1958, instating a new constitution and increasing the power of the presidency, his critics did not hesitate to compare his trajectory to Marshall Pétain's accession to power in 1940 and the fascistic and autocratic changes to the state and state policy that resulted.[3]

The same divisions arose among those who deployed the language of Resistance. The "original" Resistance consisted of a variety of networks and movements that sprang up across France to oppose Nazi occupation. Many also targeted and fought against the cooperation and collaboration of the French Vichy government. At first disparate and loosely organized, as the war progressed these movements grew and gradually came under some degree of coordination and control by the "Free France" of General de Gaulle, another opposition force that was based in London and enjoyed the support of the British government. The Resistance was key to maintaining internal opposition to Nazis and vichyists in France and played an essential role in laying the groundwork for a successor state in France after its eventual Liberation.[4] As a result,

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[2] Jacques Soustelle, "Lettre d'un intellectuel à quelques autres," November 14, 1955, in the Bibliothèque de documentation internationale contemporaine (BDIC), Jacques Delarue Collection, F delta 880, Folder: Algérie 1955.
[3] See, for instance, Soustelle, *L'Espérance trahie*, Paris: Alma 1962, p. 263; and Georges Bidault, *D'une résistance à l'autre,* Paris: Siècle 1965, pp. 23-24.
[4] Olivier Wieviorka, *Une certaine idée de la Résistance: Défense de la France 1940-1949*, Paris: Seuil 1995, pp. 411-412.

the Resistance came to occupy a privileged place in national memory, and to invoke it was to invoke simultaneously the values of honor, self-sacrifice, commitment to human rights, and supreme fidelity to the French nation.

The Algerian War produced a number of fractures among political actors and in public opinion, and groups and individuals who opposed state policy quickly seized on the Resistance and its moral associations to describe and justify their work. In one case, the small minority of anti-colonialist French who chose to actively support Algerian independence—by materially supporting the FLN independence effort, for instance, especially by serving as a relay between the FLN in Algeria and its Metropolitan branches in Paris and other cities in France—invoked the memory of the Resistance to justify their illegal and clandestine activities. These *porteurs de valises*, or "suitcase carriers," as they came to be known, drew on arguments from individual conscience and the right to take a moral stance against one's government that resembled arguments used by resisters over a decade earlier. Many of the *porteurs de valises* had come of age in the post-World War II years, too young to have participated in the anti-Nazi Resistance, and they saw their current political engagement as their own Resistance, their own moral stand to uphold the values of their country even when, in their eyes, the majority of their fellow citizens would not.[5] Less frequently, actors claiming the mantle of the Resistance were themselves former resisters or worked through institutions that had been important in the anti-Nazi Resistance. *Les Editions de Minuit*, for instance, was a famous Resistance publishing house of the 1940s that came to be the most famous publisher of anti-torture and anti-colonial works during the Algerian War, and its management consciously drew a line of moral continuity between their actions of the 1940s and those of the Algerian War.[6]

Claims to the legacy of the Resistance were not, however, the exclusive property of the anti-colonial left. In 1959, when de Gaulle began to inch toward support for Algerian independence—and especially when independence became state policy near the end of the war—swaths of the non-gaullist political right and conservative portions of the population drew on the

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[5] Martin Evans, *The Memory of Resistance: French Opposition to the Algerian War (1954-1962)*, Oxford: Berg 1997, pp. 38-41. Evans uses the term "anti-Nazi Resistance" to refer to those individuals, groups, and movements of the 1940s who worked to oppose and undermine the Nazi occupation and the Vichy regime and to distinguish them from individuals and groups who claimed this tradition during the Algerian War. I use the term "anti-Nazi Resistance" to mean the same thing, noting that "anti-Nazi" covers opposition to Nazis, to Vichy, and to collaboration with the Nazi occupation more generally.

[6] Anne Simonin, *Le Droit de Désobéissance: Les Éditions de Minuit en guerre d'Algérie*, Paris: Minuit 2012, pp. 36-40.

language and memory of the Resistance to channel their refusal and their feelings of frustration, anger, and betrayal. Perhaps most famously, after a failed coup by some of the highest French military authorities in Algeria, a number of officers joined together to form the "Secret Army Organization" (in French, *Organisation Armée Secrète*, or OAS), a terrorist organization that attempted to forestall Algerian independence through propaganda and "blind" bombings in Algeria and metropolitan France. Their name evoked the *Armée Secrète* of the Resistance as well as the ORA (*Organisation de résistance de l'armée*, the Army Resistance Organization), networks of anti-Nazi resisters who chose to oppose German occupation through armed guerilla struggle.[7]

But among partisans of *Algérie française*—those who fought and spoke out against Algerian independence and insisted that the territory and its people remain under French political authority—the most notable and developed deployment of the memory of the Resistance came from Georges Bidault. In April 1962, after the cease-fire in March that brought an end to hostilities between the French military and the FLN, Bidault, traveling abroad clandestinely, sent a letter to French authorities announcing the creation of a new *Conseil National de la Résistance*. According to Bidault, this new organization alone could prevent the amputation of Algeria from France and the unpardonable abandonment and violation of French core values that this "loss" would represent. Though little more than a propaganda machine—the new CNR never participated in any bombings or violence of any kind, instead issuing tracts and statements that condemned de Gaulle and Algerian independence—the organization endured for nearly a year. And with the nearly complete dismemberment of the OAS by the French state in early 1962, the new CNR represented the last serious defense of *Algérie française* and opposition to the still-young gaullist regime. Over the course of its existence, Bidault and his collaborators saturated the rhetoric of the CNR with the language of the anti-Nazi Resistance and developed its vision of and response to contemporary events by drawing heavily on the memory of this Resistance. Even after the defeat of the CNR and the exile of Georges Bidault to Brazil in March of 1963, Bidault continued to fuse his criticisms of de Gaulle and the independent Algeria with references to the Resistance, an effort that culminated in 1965 with the publication of his political memoirs, *From One Resistance To the Other*.

[7] Sylvie Thénault, *Histoire de la guerre d'indépendance algérienne*, Paris: Flammarion 2005, p. 242.

Historians since the Algerian War have always taken note of Bidault's re-imagining of the Resistance at the end of the Algerian War, but a number of problematic trends mark the historiography on Bidault, the CNR, and uses of the Resistance by *Algérie française* partisans more generally. On the level of basic accuracy, many scholars fail to distinguish between the OAS and Bidault's new CNR, seeing the latter as the OAS in sheep's clothing, an attempt to renovate the public image of a terrorist organization that had fallen into serious disrepute. Rémi Kauffer, in two works written decades after the events of the 1960s, describes Bidault as presiding over a "second" CNR or "CNR-OAS" created on the orders of General Salan, formerly the highest military and civilian authority in Algeria and at the time the head of the OAS.[8] Henry Rousso situates Bidault alongside Yves Godard and Roger Degueldre, two officers at the top of the OAS, and describes them all without qualification as OAS members.[9] Over time, fewer and fewer scholars have made this mistake, but it continues to appear occasionally, even in respected works by well-known historians. For instance, in his *La Vie en Blue: France and the French Since 1900*, Rod Kedward seems to assimilate Bidault and his CNR collaborator Jacques Soustelle into the group of OAS leaders who "were sentenced to imprisonment or exile" but whose organization "continued a shadowy existence."[10] The CNR and the OAS did indeed have many close ties, and over time the two organizations made attempts at coordination and unification, but their relationship was always marked by disagreement and power struggles among *Algérie française* partisans. The CNR should in no way be seen as a direct successor to the OAS, and even less as a front organization with no independence or program of its own. Failure by scholars to recognize this more complex dynamic reproduces confusions, both accidental and deliberate, that existed in the public's understanding of these organizations in the 1960s. Given the difficulty of understanding the nuances of the relationship between groups that themselves did not always agree on the nature of that relationship, the press often conflated the

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[8] See Rémi Kauffer, *L'O.A.S.: Histoire d'une organisation secrète*, Paris: Fayard 1986, p. 388; and *OAS: Histoire de la guerre franco-française*, Paris: Fayard 2002. Despite his journalistic style and generally poor documentation of his sources, Kauffer's two volumes on the OAS remain some of the most important works on the subject, as few academic monographs have treated the history of the organization in its entirety. (For a notable exception, see Olivier Dard, *Voyage au cœur de l'OAS*, Paris: Perrin 2005.) Kauffer sees his 2002 volume as a sort of replacement of the 1986 work on the basis of new documents that permit revisions to his original narrative, but aside from adjusting a few details, he reproduces the elision of the CNR and the OAS that he first made in 1986, and correspondingly sees conflicts between the two groups as intra-OAS disagreements.

[9] Henry Rousso, "La Seconde Guerre Mondiale dans la mémoire des droites," in Jean-François Sirinelli (ed.), *Histoire des droites en France*, Paris: Gallimard 1992, vol. 2, p. 587.

[10] Rod Kedward, *La Vie en Blue: France and the French Since 1900*, New York: Allen Lane 2005, p. 348.

two. Many politicians did as well, no doubt to the advantage and satisfaction of a gaullist government working to eliminate any and all remaining opposition to Algerian independence.

Related to and even more widespread than this conflation, many historians have also tended to judge the CNR as an illegitimate successor to the anti-Nazi Resistance and the first CNR and therefore not worthy of this legacy. This judgment has its roots in the attitudes of many of Bidault's opponents in the early 1960s. In his political memoirs, Bidault frequently complained of the news media's "use of quotation marks for vocabulary that people don't like"—namely, and most importantly, his "Conseil national de la Résistance"—and he likely would have advanced the same critiques against much of the contemporary scholarship on the second CNR.[11] Kauffer, again, often places the acronym "CNR" in quotes when discussing its inception.[12] But this disdain for Bidault's resistancialist language more often manifests itself implicitly in many historians' much more ready application of the "Resistance" label to left wing or anti-colonial movements who claimed it, most notably the *porteurs de valises*.[13] Hervé Hamon titled his book on this phenomenon *Les porteurs de valises: the French Resistance to the Algerian war*, and Martin Evans' *The Memory of Resistance: French Opposition to the Algerian War (1954-1962)* carries the idea even further.[14] Evans essentially identifies the *porteurs de valises* as the primary bearers of the memory of the Resistance, with little acknowledgement of other actors, *Algérie française* partisans and the second CNR included, who evoked, reinterpreted, and reformulated this memory.[15] While Evans never explicitly endorses the *porteurs de valises* as anything like the sole legitimate successors to the anti-Nazi Resistance, his analysis reveals his favorability to the idea that anti-colonialist activism might be seen as the "logical extension" of the principles that animated the Resistance of the 1940s. He frequently describes these pro-FLN activists as a new "Resistance movement," using the same capitalized form of the word that he uses to name the anti-Nazi Resistance. Such decisions on his part lend credence to the idea that the *porteurs de valises* were "legitimate" successors to the older generation of resisters. But they also imply that others who claimed the mantle of the Resistance, like Bidault and other members of the CNR, might not have been worthy of the name

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[11] Georges Bidault, *op. cit.*, p. 265.
[12] See, for instance, Kauffer, *OAS: Histoire de la guerre franco-française*, *op. cit.*, p. 418.
[13] Throughout this thesis, I have anglicized the French word *résistancialiste* as "resistancialist." I use it to characterize Bidault's (and others') conceptions of the Resistance, both as a historical phenomenon and an ideal or set of values.
[14] Hervé Hamon, *Les porteurs de valises: la résistance française à la guerre d'Algérie*, Paris: Albin Michel 1979.
[15] Martin Evans' *The Memory of Resistance*, *op. cit.*

by virtue of their endorsement of the colonial order and their association with the violence committed by the OAS.

In this thesis I assume as one of my primary goals the refutation of these historiographical trends. While it is not the place of historians to comment on the "legitimacy" of the new resistance movements of the Algerian war—however that quality might be defined—evaluating the legacy of a movement like the anti-Nazi Resistance and the effects it had on French society in the decades following World War II does fall within the purview of scholarly inquiry. In this sense, Bidault and the new CNR were as much a part of the legacy of the World War II Resistance as the *porteurs de valises* and the many others who claimed the mantle of this tradition. This is true in part because of historical continuities between the first and second CNR (Bidault, for instance, presided over each, and Jacques Soustelle, an important figure within Free France in the 1940s, sat next to Bidault on the Executive Committee of the new CNR). But Bidault's political activity of 1962-1963 may also be considered a part of the legacy of the resistance in the sense that his evocation of the Resistance was substantive and not a purely opportunistic or instrumental move. The anti-Nazi Resistance of the 1940s was itself a movement grounded in certain broad moral and patriotic sensibilities, and it regrouped an enormous range of political actors—from communists and socialists to liberals and conservatives—each of whom had a different understanding of what it meant to resist. This broad appeal with little determined political content was what made the language and model of the Resistance available to just as wide a range of actors during the Algerian war. Of course, it is entirely possible that Bidault's evocation of the Resistance sprang in part from cynical motivations. The methods of history have no way of determining the extent to which Bidault "really" believed what he said about the Resistance and its pertinence to the *Algérie française* cause. But Bidault did not immediately deploy this memory when de Gaulle announced his policy of self-determination. He took that step only in the last stage of his anti-independence activity and at the end of a process of radicalization brought about by the political events of the early 1960s. And he drew on republican political values, an opposition to torture, and other stances that had characterized the Resistance of the 1940s. If the memory and language of the Resistance was available to the *porteurs de valises*, it was equally available to Bidault, who re-deployed it in response to what he perceived as legitimate problems in French political life.

None of this is to say that there was nothing problematic or contradictory about Bidault's use of the memory and idea of the Resistance. One need not even take issue, as many of his critics did, with the morality of Bidault's evocation of the Resistance to recognize that the social and political conditions of the Algerian War were distinct from those of World War II, and that consequently any attempt at transposing the model of the Resistance to the Algerian scenario was bound to experience serious limitations. Much of Bidault's evocation of this memory, for instance, was motivated by his fervent, even paranoid anti-communism, yet French communists played a critical role during the anti-Nazi Resistance. Bidadult had to bend over backwards to resolve this contradiction in his political rhetoric, much to the detriment of his message. Of course, the original Resistance itself was neither homogeneous nor without its own contradictions. And many of Bidault's positions emerged from commitments that were intertwined with his original commitment to the Resistance. (His Catholic and Christian Democratic ideals, for instance, grounded his republican values just as much as they grounded the vaguely anti-Islamic beliefs by which he justified French empire in North Africa.[16]) He also pointed out the importance of Algeria and French empire more generally to the Resistance itself—as, for instance, a staging ground for gaullist forces as World War II progressed. These qualifications notwithstanding, the contradictions and limitations in Bidault's evocation of the Resistance were mostly of his own making and remained unresolved through the end of his *Algérie française* activism.

A third argument common in the historiography that this thesis attempts to address is the claim that references to the Resistance during the Algerian War were largely ineffective or meaningless because of the diversity of actors who called on this memory and the variety of reasons for which they did so. Rod Kedward speaks of the "ambivalent legacy of resistance" at this moment in French history, referring to the broad disagreements among former resisters and contemporary political actors over how the resistancialist commitments of the 1940s would translate into a political stance during the Algerian War.[17] Olivier Wieviorka notes that references to the "somber years" of occupation and Resistance were "simultaneously used by both camps" on each side of the Algerian conflict but also lost "all effectiveness." These disagreements over the meaning and legacy of Resistance caused this reference to "lose its

[16] In Chapter 2, I will examine some of Bidault's justifications for the French presence in Algeria, which included his dismissiveness toward Islam and Algerian nationalism as bases for political identity in Algeria.
[17] Kedward, *La Vie en Bleu: op. cit.*, pp. 341-343.

universal dimension to be mobilized in service of specifically French causes."[18] While I agree with the claim that the Resistance no longer functioned during the Algerian War as a powerful mobilizing tool, I would contend at the same time that uses of the Resistance were not simply empty gestures devoid of historical significance. Even if those invoking the Resistance failed thereby to recruit in large numbers, framing their actions in the language and memory of the Resistance largely determined these new resisters' understandings of contemporary political events as well as the way they formulated their responses. Through the new CNR and his personal writings and pronouncements, Bidault developed perhaps the most sophisticated evocation of the Resistance among *Algérie française* partisans, and this choice weighed heavily on his understanding of Algerian independence and on the discourses and strategies he developed to challenge it. Even more significant, Bidault's resistancialist vision tapped into a broad receptivity to the language of the Resistance within the *Algérie française* movement and allowed him to acquire some degree of hegemony in the movement's final days. He never lacked for dissenters: nationalist and pétainist currents within *Algérie française* sometimes pushed back discreetly but firmly against Bidault's dominance, with splinter groups refusing to ratify Bidault's ideas as the main lens for understanding the fight against Algerian independence. But most of his comrades accepted this framework, in contrast to the majority of the metropolitan French population. Bidault's ideas had little currency among the French public at large or the political class, and he would never achieve the mass support necessary to turn back Algerian independence and remove de Gaulle from power.

This thesis deals with questions of "historical memory" or "collective memory," but given the broadness of these terms it is important to define them more precisely. Historians have taken a number of approaches to this task. On the most general level, Henry Rousso has defined collective memory as "the presence of the past, a past that is first an inheritance or a legacy, a given before which a group – like an individual – may remain active or passive, that it can accept, refuse, or ignore, of which it may even simply remain unaware."[19] Political actors may formulate or respond to this presence in a number of ways: they may shape it into group

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[18] Olivier Wieviorka, "Les (non) incidences du procès de Nuremberg : l'affaire des '121,'" in Annette Wieviorka (ed.), *Les Procès de Nuremberg et de Tokyo*, Bruxelles: André Versailles 2010, p. 296. Unless otherwise indicated, all translations from French into English of primary and secondary sources are mine.

[19] Henry Rousso, *op. cit.*, p. 551. Original text: "la présence du passé, un passé qui est d'abord un héritage, c'est-à-dire un legs, un donné devant lequel un groupe - comme un individu - peut rester actif ou passif, qu'il peut accepter, refuser, ou ignorer, voire tout simplement méconnaître."

traditions, encode it in the fundamental myths of their communities, grow nostalgic for a golden era, or revise or obscure certain aspects of their understanding of the past. (And, of course, nothing prevents these various forms and activities from "crossing and mixing," according to Rousso.)[20] Other scholars have taken issue with such expansive definitions and called for more precision and clarity in talk of "collective" or "historical memory." Notably, in a collective work edited by Claire Andrieu *et al.* entitled *Politics of the Past: Political Uses of the Past in contemporary France*, the editors favor the notion of "uses of the past," a notion "endowed with a new connotation and that appears in many respects to be an analytical category that is better adapted and more precise than the too-polysemous notion of memory." They wish to avoid being drawn into the politics of states' so-called "duty to remember" crimes and atrocities committed by predecessor regimes against their own populations, which may potentially devolve into a "competition of victims" seeking superior recognition for their own groups.[21]

As I explore the evocations, reformulations, and political deployments of the Resistance by Georges Bidault, I will proceed roughly along the methodological lines laid out by Andrieu and her collaborators in *Politics of the Past*, seeing Bidault's efforts as a political use of the past. Bidault developed and disseminated a certain version and interpretation of the events of the Resistance in the pursuit of his four primary and interlocking political projects: French nationalism, opposition to Algerian independence, anti-gaullism, and anti-communism. As a result of the intense political and polemical context in which Bidault's evocations were produced, his understanding of contemporary events and of the past events of the anti-Nazi Resistance exercised a strong reciprocal influence on each other: just as Bidault formulated a certain version of the past in large part to serve his contemporary political goals, the events of the present came to reshape his understanding of the time of the first Resistance. Sensitivity to this context also requires me to treat Bidault's memory of the Resistance not as a static and isolated narrative of events but a dynamic, evolving political tool that evolved in response to the changing political environment around Bidault and in turn shaped that environment. The

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[20] *Ibid.*, p. 554-555.

[21] Marie-Claire Lavabre, "Avant-Propos," in *Politiques du Passé : Usages politiques du passé dans la France contemporaine*. Aix-en-Provence: Publications de l'Université de Provence 2006, p. 9. Original text: "dotée de ce fait d'une connotation nouvelle et apparaît à bien des égards comme une catégorie d'analyse plus adaptée, plus précise, que la notion de mémoire, trop polysémique et porteuse de surcroît des dérives régulièrement dénoncées du phénomène mémoriel et particulièrement du *devoir de mémoire*, ainsi réduit à une stratégie politique, à des 'abus de la mémoire' éventuellement portés par la 'concurrence des victimes'."

elaboration of my arguments relies on close attention to chronology and to the details of evolution of Bidault's uses of the past.

I have organized this thesis around three chapters that proceed roughly chronologically. In the first chapter, I will provide the background and context relevant to a full understanding of Bidault and the new CNR from 1958-1965, schematically explaining the history of the anti-Nazi Resistance, the development of the Algerian War, and Bidault's own path from his resistancialist engagement in the early 1940s to his eventual exile to Brazil in 1965. I will characterize the broader context of references to the Resistance during the Algerian War in general and by *Algérie française* partisans in particular and situate Bidault's political evolution and radicalization in this context. Chapter 2 will take on the new vision of the Resistance that Bidault developed and trace it in detail through his own writings and pronouncements and those of the CNR that bore his personal signature or approval. My exposition and analysis of Bidault's conception of the Resistance will rest on careful attention to chronology, i.e., to this conception's development over time and to the ways in which the series of political events to which it responded influenced this development. Finally, in Chapter 3, I will address the actual functioning of Bidault's use of the Resistance in the political context in which he deployed it. I will argue that, in spite of political differences within the CNR and between the CNR and the OAS, Bidault imposed it as the new CNR's primary discourse with a great deal of success. This success, however, was limited: his hegemony among the broad coalition of *Algérie française* partisans remained partial, as certain groups failed to recognize his organization and its legitimating narrative as authoritative. More importantly, Bidault never met with any significant success in convincing the French political authorities and public opinion—domestic or international—of the legitimacy of his project and its continuity with the Resistance of the 1940s. This failure reflected the overwhelming hostility to the *Algérie française* cause that had developed in the political environment and heralded the eventual dissolution of Bidault's final resistancialist project in early 1963.

I

A Story of Radicalization

World War II, Decolonization, and the Origins of Georges Bidault's Second Council of Resistance

In the early summer of 1943, Jean Moulin was arrested and tortured by German police in France and ultimately deported to Germany, dying en route.[22] Moulin had been Charles de Gaulle's "delegate general" to the interior Resistance and Bidault's predecessor as the president of the CNR, formed only a month earlier. With the loss of Moulin, the Resistance council had to choose a new president, and Claude Bouchinet-Serreulles, the CNR's interim director, recommended that de Gaulle approve Georges Bidault, Moulin's closest collaborator, for the position. The CNR waited weeks for a decision; Serreulles continued to send de Gaulle increasingly frustrated messages reiterating his recommendation and asking when he could expect a decision. Meanwhile, most of the prominent figures of *France Combattante* (Free France had been renamed "Fighting France" in order to include the interior Resistance under its umbrella) in London and Algeria hesitated to approve Bidault for a variety of reasons, and it was left to Serreulles to make a move. On August 29, in defiance of London's tacit opposition, Serreulles convinced the representatives of the CNR to vote by a large margin in favor of Bidault, who would hold the presidency of the CNR until the liberation of France in 1944. De Gaulle and many of his collaborators failed to react violently, but their displeasure was evident. De Gaulle would in his memoirs lament his inability to choose Moulin's successor and impose tighter control over the CNR.[23]

In some ways this episode illustrates the strangely contradictory position Bidault held in French political life. On the one hand, he always remained among the most important political figures of the era and in a few cases held some of the highest political offices: in addition to his presidency of the CNR, he was Minister of Foreign Affairs four times and Premier twice.[24] In a

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[22] Daniel Cordier, *Jean Moulin: La République des catacombes*, Paris: Gallimard 1999, pp. 456-466, 470-474. It is unclear whether Moulin committed suicide or died from torture.
[23] *Ibid.*, pp. 483-487, 639-640.
[24] "Biographie extraite du dictionnaire des parlementaires français de 1940 à 1958 (La documentation française)," Georges Bidault, from the "Base de données des députés français depuis 1789," on the website of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/sycomore/fiche.asp?num_dept=788. Accessed

way, even his presidency of the second CNR and position as the last *de facto* leader of *Algérie française* reproduced and ensured his prominence in French politics. On the other hand, Bidault's political career was also tainted throughout by the feeling of "near-misses," of being passed over for even higher honors and offices or failing to achieve his political goals. The skepticism that de Gaulle felt for Bidault in 1943 never faded, and the latter never succeeded in penetrating the general's inner circle. In the periods during which Bidault served as Minister of Foreign Affairs, he oversaw, much against his will, the independence of Indochina and Morocco from France. Shortly before de Gaulle's return to power in 1958, Bidault and Jacques Soustelle narrowly missed an opportunity to lead the government in an attempt to end the Algerian War and prevent Algerian independence.[25] And, of course, Bidault's progressive marginalization within his own political party and in French political life—thanks to his persistent fight for *Algérie française*, a persistence that failed to bring about the results Bidault hoped for—can be seen as his final and most decisive political failure.

Yet this contradictory position makes Bidault a useful observer of and index of French politics during the period that stretched from the Resistance to the end of the Algerian War, just as understanding these decades is essential to understanding the political environment that shaped Bidault and to which he responded. In this chapter I will outline the basic contours of French political life during these decades. I do not, of course, intend this sketch as a comprehensive or definitive history of the period, but rather as an exposé that serves two purposes. On a basic, factual level, it provides the background and context necessary to understanding Bidault's Algerian politics, the new CNR, and the evolution of the *Algérie française* cause at the end of the Algerian war. But I also hope to show the close relationship between the events of these decades and Bidault's individual political evolution, how each of these influenced the other, and how his political activity of 1962-1963 was the culmination of certain processes in his own political development and in that of French political life.

I examine this background as a set of independent but interlocking processes that shaped the broad contours of French postwar life: the path of certain resisters and gaullists from the early 1940s to the exercise of power in the postwar decades; the rise of communist powers to greater world significance in the wake of Nazi and fascist defeat and the problems this posed for

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February 11, 2013. Here, I translate the French term for head of government—*Président du Conseil*, or "President of the Council,"—as "premier."

[25] Jacques Dalloz, *Georges Bidault: Biographie politique*, Paris: L'Harmattan 1992, pp. 393-394.

France and other European states; and the Second World War as an event that fanned the flames of nationalist politics in the French empire—in Algeria as elsewhere—deepening and transforming decades-old forms of contestation of colonial rule. Much of French politics in the decades following the Liberation took the form of responding to this anti-colonial contestation and reformulating French understands of national identity in the face of a disintegrating empire.

This was the environment in which Georges Bidault came of age politically, and he, like his colleagues, had to face these challenges. In fact, his post-Liberation political career dealt largely with the two themes outlined just above: managing relations with the communist world and attempting to suppress or mitigate the effects of anti-colonial politics and rebellion. By tracing Bidault's path from his roots to *Algérie française* alongside the story of national politics in France during this period, I hope to illuminate two important features of Bidault's political trajectory. On the one hand, his early political engagement in Christian Democratic politics and the Resistance conditioned his politics throughout his life, endowing him with a resolute anti-communism and a *certaine idée de la France*.[26] His Christian Democratic background in particular conditioned his entire political existence. A co-founder of the main Christian Democratic party after World War II, his pursuit of European integration, his anti-communism, and his stances on other issues were all rooted in his faith and his Christian Democratic politics. On the other hand, Bidault's politics was neither static nor straightforwardly determined by his core values. From 1945 to the early 1960s he underwent a progressive radicalization that made him less and less willing to countenance anti-colonial and nationalist contestation. Living through a period in which France's East Asian and African colonies were gradually slipping away, by the late 1950s he had become bitter and hardened in his resolution that Algeria remain French. These attitudes and their intensification certainly rested in part on certain common ideas about Algeria that distinguished it from other French colonial possessions as a true "part of France" and not simply a colony. But they were also the result of choices and evaluations on Bidault's part, of a man seeing the political reality of his interwar and Resistance years

[26] This expression comes from the first lines of Charles de Gaulle's memoirs: "Toute ma vie, je me suis fait une certaine idée de la France… [All my life, I have had a certain idea of France.]" (Charles de Gaulle, *Memoires de guerre, I: L'Appel, 1940-1942*, Paris: Plon 1954, p. 7.) For de Gaulle, France had a unique and glorious role to play in the world, which he sought to protect from Nazi Occupation and the Vichy regime during World War II. I borrow it here to suggest that Bidault, like de Gaulle and other interior and exterior resisters, conceived of his work in the Resistance as a defense of the French nation—of a particular set of values and sociocultural community, as well as of a certain important role for that nation in the world. Of course, Bidault's idea of France was not always, as we will see, what de Gaulle's was.

challenged and dismantled by anti-colonial contestation and attempting to reconcile his previous understandings with contemporary developments. Rather than accepting those developments as evidence his against his former views, he clung to these views all the more strongly, seeing in this decision a mark of moral integrity and fidelity to his nation (and, more generally, his faith). He was among the few who remained committed to the cause of *Algérie française* to the end.

From the Third Republic to Occupation and Resistance

Georges Bidault was born on October 5, 1899, to a rural family of proprietors in Moulins, in central France. Catholicism was from his youth an important formative influence in his life: several of his family members were clergymen, and he pursued his secondary studies at a Jesuit institution in Turin, in Northern Italy.

In the decades following his time in Turin, Bidault devoted himself to two major pursuits that both profoundly shaped his understanding of the world and his political action from World War II onward: his career as a history teacher and his Catholic and Christian Democratic political engagement. During World War I he began his university studies, and while these were interrupted briefly when he was drafted into the French infantry in 1918, he was able to pick them up after the close of the war, studying at the *Faculté des lettres de Paris* (the College of Letters of Paris) and passing the *agrégation* in history in 1925 with top marks.[27] From then on, he pursued a career as a high school history teacher, ultimately settling into a position at the Louis-le-Grand high school in Paris in 1931, which he would hold until his conscription in the French armed forces in 1939.

Parallel to his professional activities he entered political activity early on behalf of Christian political causes. While at the *Faculté des lettres* he joined the *Action catholique de la Jeunesse française*, a lay Catholic organization that sought to promote Catholic social and political goals as an alternative to both liberalism and socialism. In the 1920s Bidault moved on from this organization to the Popular Democratic Party (PDP), a political party that also operated within the spectrum of Christian democratic politics. In each case he advanced quickly through the ranks, becoming the vice president of the *Action catholique* in the early 1920s and joining the Executive Commission of the PDP in 1933, two years after joining the party. His

[27] The *agrégation* is a competitive exam in particular subject areas that qualifies those who pass for positions in French secondary education, and in some cases higher levels of education.

political engagement increasingly took the form of political journalism, and in 1932 he co-founded the journal *L'Aube* (The Dawn), becoming its editor-in-chief two years later. In this capacity Bidault would achieve some measure of notoriety at the national level, in particular for a series of editorials he penned in 1938 against the Munich Agreement, signed by Germany, France, Britain, and Italy, which allowed Hitler to annex certain portions of Czechoslovakia. He saw the fate of Czechoslovkia not as a guarantee against further aggression by Hitler but as a sign that Europe could expect more imperialist expansion from Nazi Germany. He was unsparing in his criticism of Nazism and fascism.[28]

In 1939 France declared war alongside Britain in response to Germany's invasion of Poland, and Bidault was soon given the opportunity to put his politics into practice more concretely. Bidault volunteered to fight in the army and found himself a sergeant in central France, in his hometown of Moulins. He spent much of the first year of the war there waiting, but in June 1940, during the Battle of France, German forces overwhelmed his unit, and he was taken prisoner and detained in Neubrandenburg, north of Berlin.[29] Shortly following the battle in which Bidault was captured, the French government headed by Paul Reynaud resigned, and the ministers voted to install World War I hero Marshall Philippe Pétain as the head of government. Pétain rapidly negotiated an armistice with Germany. The armistice brought an end to the assault on France but accepted German occupation of its northern and western regions as well as a significant reduction in its armed forces and a variety of other highly costly measures.[30] While in captivity, Bidault learned of the armistice, which he "refused" as he "dreamed of victory."[31] After thirteen months of captivity Bidault was released and sent to Paris, where he began to search for like-minded opponents of the armistice and German occupation.[32]

When Bidault was returned to France following his captivity, he quickly entered into a Resistance movement. Though it is identified as a single entity with a single name, the Resistance was in fact a heterogeneous assemblage of groups and individuals who spontaneously entered into forms of active contestation against Nazi Occupation and the Vichy regime from the earliest days of the Occupation. Such decisions were often matters of individual choice made in an environment where political parties, labor unions, the Church, and the army generally either

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[28] Jacques Dalloz, *Georges Bidault: Biographie politique*, Paris: Harmattan 1992, 9-43.
[29] *Ibid.*, pp. 52-53.
[30] Rod Kedward, *France and the French: A Modern History*, New York: Overlook 2006, pp. 242-243.
[31] Georges Bidault, *D'une résistance à l'autre*, Paris: Siècle 1965, p. 29.
[32] For Bidault's wartime experiences of 1939-1941, see *Ibid.*, pp. 26-30.

rallied to the regime or were silenced or suppressed by it.[33] The forms of opposition in which early resisters chose to engage varied; some interfered with normal state activity by cutting telephone lines or damaging state infrastructure in other ways, while others published clandestine newspapers and tracts to express their opposition to the Nazis and Vichy and to mount their own counter-propaganda.[34] An unknowable number of French individuals committed small, isolated acts of resistance throughout the war—by, for instance, protecting French Jews from deportation—but a much smaller minority participated in a more committed, increasingly institutionalized form of struggle. These grew from a small, scattered assemblage of groups at the beginning of the war into a large, powerful network of political movements and guerrilla units that served as a major political player in the lead-up to the war's end and was influential in setting the postwar political stage in France.[35]

Another form of resistance, taking root outside of France, was inaugurated by a speech given by General Charles de Gaulle on June 18, 1940, and broadcast by the BBC. He used the speech as an opportunity to remind listeners, in France and abroad, that this war was a global war, and France still had its allies in the world. With their aid, the cause was not lost; France could again become a viable actor in the war and go on to expel and defeat Nazi Germany. Later, many would attribute the origins of the "Résistance intérieure" to this speech, seeing de Gaulle as the originator of all forms of Resistance and the reason those within France chose to rebel against Nazi Germany and Vichy. As I will explore in greater detail in Chapter 2, Bidault himself maintained that the "Resistance was gaullist" in this sense, even in the days of his most bitter and determined opposition to the general.[36] Yet few among the French heard de Gaulle's speech at the time it was broadcast, and for the most part the interior Resistance was *sui generis*, the result, as Olivier Wieviorka has pointed out, of individual choices made in the face of France's military defeat by Germany. "Ultimately," says Wieviorka, "the defeat of 1940 pushed

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[33] Olivier Wieviorka, *Une certaine idée de la Résistance: Défense de la France 1940-1949*, Paris: Seuil 1995, p. 411.

[34] For an in-depth study of the political and strategic evolution of a particular Resistance network, *Défense de la France*, see Olivier Wieviorka, *op. cit*.

[35] François Marcot has made the distinction between the "Resistance-organization," the explicit groups and networks that institutionalized, coordinated, and grew their action over the course of the war; and the "Resistance-movement," which included "all those who took individual action and all whose acts of solidarity were essential to the organized Resistance. The Resistance-movement was not at all marginal to the Resistance-organization: it conditioned its existence." François Marcot, "Pour une sociologie de la Résistance: intentionnalité et fonctionnalité", in Antoine Prost (ed.), *La Résistance, une histoire sociale*, Paris: L'Atelier 1997, p. 23, cited in Wieviorka, *Histoire de la Résistance: 1940-1945*, Paris: Perrin 2013, pp. 15-16.

[36] Bidault, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

future resisters to act. Without defeat, no Resistance."[37] Which is not, of course, to say, "Without de Gaulle, no Resistance." The thesis that de Gaulle created or inspired the interior Resistance fails in at least two respects. De Gaulle himself almost certainly did not intend his radio broadcast of June 18 as a call to mass resistance against the occupation of France. "Charles de Gaulle," says Wieviorka, "intended to keep France as such in the war. This ambition obligated him first to combat the Vichy regime, guilty of having concluded a shameful armistice…. But…de Gaulle never imagined he would mobilize the population of a captive France by forging the terms of a civil resistance, nor that he would outline the contours of an armed struggle by developing, for example, some sort of guerilla."[38] Widespread civilian resistance lay outside his ambition to reconstitute a French army that could help beat back the Nazis and defeat the Axis powers. But, perhaps more importantly, resisters' reasons for committing themselves to anti-Nazi political activity were diverse and generally had little to do with de Gaulle or his radio address (which few people in France heard in the first place). Though many cited "patriotism" as their primary motivator, the meaning of this term varied widely across the spectrum of engaged resisters. Each individual had to decide on the basis of his or her own conscience and reason who was the enemy to be resisted and what were the values and the idea of the French nation to be defended.[39]

The anti-Nazi Resistance, though always the active pursuit of a small minority of people, drew from across social classes and political affiliations. Political parties were generally not the vehicles by which French people participated in the Resistance, with one major exception: the French Communist Party (*Parti communiste français*, or PCF). Banned shortly after the declaration of hostilities in World War II, the PCF quickly adapted itself to a clandestine existence, though its earliest forms of resistance departed somewhat from that of the rest of the *Résistance intérieure*. Rather than focusing the Nazi Occupation, the early communist Resistance "adapted itself above all to the wanderings of Soviet diplomatic policy," leading them to lead a series of strikes and demonstrations against Vichy rather than the German occupier. This would change only in mid-1941, when Hitler violated his non-aggression treaty with Stalin

[37] Olivier Wieviorka, "La génération de la résistance," in *Vingtième siècle*, no. 22, April-June 1989, pp. 111-116.
[38] Olivier Wieviorka, *Histoire de la Résistance*, *op. cit.*, p. 20.
[39] *Ibid.*,p. 134.

by opening a front in the Soviet Union. From this point on, French communists began to wage an armed struggle against Nazi occupation.[40]

It was shortly after this shift that Bidault was released from captivity and entered the Resistance. After obtaining a teaching post in Lyon shortly after his return to Paris, he quickly joined the Resistance movement known as *Mouvement de Libération Française* (French Liberation Movement) or, after its journal, *Combat*. Lyon was at the time a hotbed of Resistance activity, in particular on the part of Christian democrats, and *Combat* itself was the union of *Liberté*, a strongly Christian democratic group, and the *Mouvement de Libération Nationale* of Henri Frenay. It was in Lyon in 1942 that Bidault would meet and become the close collaborator of Jean Moulin, who worked throughout France to establish ties between the *Résistance intérieure* and Free France and to better coordinate the various interior Resistance movements.[41] Thanks to his partnership with Moulin and his own industriousness, Bidault's role within the Resistance grew quickly over the following year. In April 1942, Bidault assumed the directorship of the BIP (*Bureau d'Information et de Presse,* or Press and Information Bureau), a propaganda office organized by Moulin and the "first common institution of the interior Resistance," according to Jacques Dalloz. Dalloz sums up Bidault's position at the end of the year thus: "Director of the BIP, one of the directors of *Combat*, the main movement in the Southern [non-occupied] Zone, Bidault had become in 1942 one of the principal figures responsible for the interior Resistance and its unification."[42] He went on to play important roles in the further unification and strengthening of the interior Resistance. In early 1943 he participated in the union of the three main southern Resistance movements, including his own *Combat*. In May, Jean Moulin created the *Conseil National de la Résistance* (CNR), bringing together eight large Resistance movements and several political parties and unions throughout France. But with his arrest and death in June, as we have seen, Bidault acceded to the presidency of the CNR with the virtually full support of the movements that constituted it.[43]

Bidault thus sat at the intersection of the *Résistance intérieure* and de Gaulle's FFL, represented to a large extent the legitimacy of each. He had the support of the constitutive movements of the CNR, but he never strayed from the politics of Jean Moulin that he had come

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[40] *Ibid.*, pp. 49-56.
[41] Dalloz, *op. cit.*, pp. 53-57.
[42] *Ibid.*,pp. 60-63.
[43] *Ibid.*,pp. 64-65.

to understand so intimately and in this sense kept the CNR a gaullist institution. But Bidault alone did not ensure unanimity and full cooperation across all forces of resistance, interior and exterior. Relations with communist resisters always remained complicated due to the party's connection to the Soviet Union and anti-communist sentiment among many resisters (notably Henri Frenay of *Combat*).[44] The PCF had representatives on the CNR, but relations remained difficult. Moreover, from late 1942 a separate threat to de Gaulle's power emerged in North Africa: General Henri Giraud. This French officer had escaped imprisonment in Königstein (near Dresden) and made his way to North Africa (which came under Anglo-American control soon after his escape), where he took local command of the French armed forces. The United States courted Giraud as an alternative to de Gaulle, and Giraud responded somewhat favorably, at least in pursuit of his goal to re-arm the French forces.[45] Giraud's arrival on the scene represented yet another political fracture among French anti-Nazi forces and further complicated the power play among those fighting for the liberation of France and jockeying for a say in the reconstruction of French political life after the war.

In the end, however, "giraudism" would not break the unity within the interior Resistance nor its cooperation with gaullist forces in London. These groups fought for the same immediate goal—the liberation of France from German occupation—and their cooperation peaked during the Allied Liberation of Paris in August 1944. With Allied support, French forces took the city from the Germans following a rebellion within Paris led by resisters. On August 26, 1944, Georges Bidault personally received Charles de Gaulle into Paris, and together these two men—the leader of the Free French and the president of the CNR—would walk in triumph with other leaders of the FFL and the Resistance down the Champs-Elysées, celebrating the liberation of

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[44] See, for instance, Wieviorka, *Histoire de la Résistance*, *op. cit.*, pp. 262-268.

[45] *Ibid.*,p. 194. Wieviorka characterizes the stakes of the emergent Giraudism thus: "For the Allied cause, the sudden arrival of General Giraud offered a total of three positive prospects. It facilitated the rallying of the empire; it delegitimized the Vichy regime, deprived of a portion of its conservative supporters; and it finally caused part of the army to enter into dissident activity, from troops stationed in Africa to the secret service or forces that remained in the metropole. […] But there was another side to this coin. American and British public opinion could barely understand supporting a general who was as narrow-minded as he was reactionary. And the Giraudist authority, instead of binding together the French, sowed the seeds of division, including within the Resistance. The clandestine forces, far from blindly supporting Charles de Gaulle, sometimes adopted roundabout positions for reasons that mixed ideological convictions with strategic preoccupations. […] All while denouncing collaboration, a portion of the [Resistance] movements…had not rejected the Vichy regime en bloc and thus defied General de Gaulle. Giraudism allowed them to break ties with the French state while at the same time keeping their distance with respect to Free France" (p. 200).

Paris from German control.[46] The moment represented the work of resistance and liberation as a unified effort between the exterior and interior Resistance, and their common goals had necessarily imposed on them a certain degree of cooperation and coordination. But the procession down the Champs-Elysées also belied the rivalries and divisions that had existed between the Free French and the interior Resistance, between gaullists and giraudists, and between communists and virtually every other group. For some time after the war, the Resistance would acquire a legendary status, and its heterogeneity and power struggles would fade from public consciousness.

After the Liberation: 1944 to 1954

Bidault emerged into the postwar years in a powerful position in national politics. On September 9, 1944, he passed the presidency of the CNR to another member of the CNR's executive committee, Louis Saillant, to join the Provisional Government of the French Republic (*Gouvernement provisoire de la république française*, or GPRF) as Minister of Foreign Affairs. He would occupy this post through much of the rest of the 1940s and go on to play several other important roles in establishing and guiding the French Fourth Republic, including in the adoption of France's new constitution in October 1946. He also co-founded the Popular Republican Movement (*Mouvement républicain populaire*, MRP), a centrist Christian Democratic party that remained one of the major French political parties for about two decades after World War II. Bidault briefly led the Assembly from June to December 1946 but resigned in the face of intractable struggles between the MRP and the PCF. In addition to holding a seat in the Assembly for the duration of the Fourth Republic and into the Fifth, Bidault would rise to political prominence three more times before the outbreak of the Algerian War: twice as Foreign Minister and once as Premier.[47]

Bidault held the office of Minister of Foreign Affairs a total of four times, and in this capacity he was often confronted by two of the dominant political issues of postwar international relations and politics: relations with communist powers and contestation of the French colonial order. Following the defeat of Nazism and fascism with the Allied victory in the Second World War, these two themes became the primary concerns that occupied France on the world stage.

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[46] For Bidault's version of the Liberation and the procession down the Champs-Elysées, see Bidault, *op. cit.*, pp. 65-67.

[47] "Biographie," Georges Bidault, *op. cit.*

They increasingly dominated Georges Bidault's political preoccupations as well. Though Bidault was ardently anti-communist—a product of his Christian democratic politics—and hardly anti-colonialist, as Foreign Minister he approached these issues with relative pragmatism. In 1944, for instance, he joined de Gaulle on a trip to Moscow and signed with Viatcheslav Molotov, Foreign Minister of the Soviet Union, a Franco-Soviet mutual cooperation agreement.[48] While no more a friend of communism than ever, Bidault evaluated this moment and this agreement with equanimity. He saw it as an important way for France to resist the possibility of Anglo-American domination and believed that internationalist and anti-religious currents within the Soviet Union were at a low ebb: "If," he wrote later, "there was ever a time in which one might have dreamed of a reintegration of the Slavs into a brotherly Europe, this was that time."[49]

He also faced a double crisis in 1953 as Minister of Foreign Affairs as he dealt with nationalist unrest in Morocco—the Foreign Ministry held jurisdiction over the protectorates of Morocco and Tunisia—as well as the final stages of the Indochinese War. In the former case, he was instrumental in the deposition of Sultan Sidi Mohammed, who worked actively for Moroccan independence. (Facing pressure from certain officials of the French Foreign Ministry, the sultan resigned "against his will"; while Bidault did not order or particularly desire the sultan's "removal," he resigned himself to it.) But the deposition failed to achieve the French government's aims: within a year or so, "E[dgar] Faure, then Premier, judged that the solution to the Moroccan crisis would happen by the restoration of the former sultan. The latter earned his return [to power] by demanding and obtaining independence. […] By allowing the deposition of the future Mohammed V [Sidi Mohammed], [Bidault] had made him into a national hero, strengthen his authority and that of his descendents."[50]

Bidault also entered the Foreign Ministry during the endgame of the Indochinese War, during which his attempts at negotiation and soliciting a joint military intervention by Britain and the United States failed to resolve the situation in France's favor. Vietnamese communist forces were waging successfully waging war against the French thanks to increasing support from a newly communist China, and while Bidault succeeded in marginally increasing US interest in the conflict, he never obtained a military intervention that would turn the tide and keep Vietnam and its neighboring Indochinese countries under French control. Meanwhile, parliamentary and

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[48] *Ibid.*,
[49] Bidault, *op. cit.*, pp. 74-78; quote p. 75.
[50] Dalloz, *op. cit.*, pp. 282-291.

public opinion within a France weary of war increasingly turned against Bidault and the ruling government coalition, failing to credit them where they did make progress—particularly in terms of negotiation. This trend only intensified with the devastating military defeat of France at the Battle of Dien Bien Phu and continued through the Geneva Conference in early 1954, where Bidault began multilateral negotiations with the Viet Cong, the USSR, China, the United States, and Great Britain. Despite his hostility to independence in French Indochina, in Geneva he steadily built the conditions for a negotiated peace. His government finally fell in June 1954, replaced by that of Pierre Mendès-France, whose government would successfully complete the negotiations. But, as Jacques Dalloz emphasizes, "Bidault passed on to his successor a framework (this great conference of which Mendès had always been skeptical as the appropriate way to settle the conflict), a team (and even his chief of staff, Jacques de Folin, who remained chief of staff of the new Ministry of Foreign Affairs), and a solution already largely outlined. With a different style, different methods, and a different past, the new head of government completed what Bidault had already initiated. On July 21, the Geneva Agreements were concluded."[51]

Altogether, these experiences produced a hardening of Bidault's anti-communism and support for colonialism—positions that were for him closely interlinked. During World War II, France and the Soviet Union had found themselves allied against the Axis powers, and Bidault had fought alongside French communists in the Resistance. However uncomfortable he may have been with these marriages of convenience, it was difficult for him to frame communists as enemies of France when they fought alongside him for the same cause. But the wars of decolonization that France confronted in the postwar period changed the political landscape. Now France was not regaining its territory but losing it as its empire shrank, and in Indochina a communist enemy supported by communist allies had dealt this blow. As these processes unfolded, Bidault simultaneously intensified his anti-communist rhetoric and criticized the "policy of giving up" that he saw in those of his colleagues who acceded to the decolonization of the empire.[52] If he saw communism as targeting France's empire in a quest for global domination, he believed it succeeded where weak French political figures stopped defending French interests and ceded victory to its communist enemies. These analyses continued to frame

[51] Dalloz, *op. cit.*, pp. 348-378.
[52] "Biographie," Georges Bidault, *op. cit.*

Bidault's thinking on French politics in the years to come, and the coming war of independence in Algeria would only further cement these convictions for him.

The War for Algerian Independence: The Early Years, 1954-1958

In November 1954, just months after the end of the Indochina War, a string of terrorist attacks broke out in Algeria, organized and carried out by a nationalist organization known as the National Liberation Front (*Front de libération nationale*, or FLN). Though Algeria had seen revolt and violence before as nationalist groups and the population pushed back against colonial domination, the FLN's attacks proved to be a more durable form of rebellion, marking the beginning of a war that would end seven years later in Algerian independence. The Front multiplied its attacks in Algeria over the next several years, simultaneously increasingly its geographical scope from the Constantinois region of eastern Algeria to the entire territory and moving from symbolic attacks on symbols of authority (e.g., cutting telephone lines) to direct attacks on military and state personnel.[53] The FLN worked with great success during these years to increase its political authority over Algerians and challenge French authority by military means.[54]

At the same time the French state attempted to manage the uprising on several fronts: by increasing security measures in Algeria, by striking back at the ALN (the FLN's army, the *Armée de libération nationale*), and by instituting social and political reforms designed to diminish discontent among the Algerian population while preserving French authority. In April 1955, French authorities applied a state of emergency in Algeria, first to the regions where rebellion originally emerged but eventually to the entire territory. This measure increased the powers of civil authorities and security forces and placed restrictions on the circulation and activities of the local population. Hundreds of thousands of soldiers saturated the war zones in the first several years of the conflict, and the military administration grew more powerful relative

[53] Sylvie Thénault, *Histoire de la guerre d'indépendance algérienne*, Paris: Flammarion 2005, pp. 53-60.
[54] There is some difficulty in choosing appropriate terms to refer to the various social groups imbricated in the events of the Algerian war. To speak simply of "French" and "Algerians" draws on ideas of separate French and Algerian nations that were not clear-cut at the time and were actively contested by various actors in the conflict. Moreover, such a simple nomenclature fails to recognize divisions within each "camp" or categories that did not correspond neatly to a French-Algerian divide. I will generally use the term "Algerian" to refer to the colonized populations of Algeria; "*pied-noir*" to refer to Algerian residents of European descent; and "metropolitain French" to refer to French citizens from continental France. When further or different specifications are necessary, I will make them directly in the text.

to its civil counterpart as the war progressed—particularly with the law of March 17, 1956, which allowed local functionaries to pass their powers to the military. According to Sylvie Thénault, "[c]haracteristic of the war, this substitution of military actors for civilians was at the origin of the rise in power of the armed forces in Algeria."[55] The inability of the French state to suppress the Algerian rebellion led it to place more and more power in the hands of military and security forces in the hopes that therein lay the key to defeating the FLN. This in no way, however, represented a power grab by the military; civil authorities granted these increased powers freely, and they continued to couple increases in repression with reform projects. From 1954-1958, successive French governments attempted to institute new social and political structures, notably Governor General Jacques Soustelle's educational social centers (*centres sociaux éducatifs*, or CSE) in 1955 and Premier Guy Mollet's attempt in 1956 to hold municipal elections in which Algerians could participate meaningfully. Designed to increase the educational and economic positions of the colonized population and to integrate it into the political process, such projects continually ran up against sabotage by the FLN or the resistance of Algerian residents of European descent, the *pieds-noirs*.[56]

While Bidault spent the first year or so of the Algerian War as a relatively marginal observer and critic, beginning in 1956 he began to assert himself as a solid opponent to Algerian independence and a key proponent of the government's reform projects. Alongside Jacques Soustelle, he worked as one of the leaders of the Union for the Safety and Renewal of French Algeria (*Union pour le Salut et le Renouveau de l'Algérie Française*, USRAF), founded in April 1956. A group that included civilians but was dominated by politicians, USRAF brought together figures from across the French political spectrum: beyond gaullists like Soustelle, it included center-right and conservative figures like André Morice and Roger Duchet. It even drew several figures from the left, notably Albert Bayet, Maurice Viollette, and Paul Rivet.[57] Given the diversity of this group, it is difficult to say whether Bidault (or anyone else) was "representative" of the whole, but in its foundational documents USRAF did outline political goals that corresponded closely to Bidault's political positions at the time. The fight for *Algérie française*, USRAF's members claimed, was not simply for France's economic or strategic benefit (though it was for that); it was just as much about protecting French republican liberties

[55] *Ibid.*,pp. 63-70.
[56] *Ibid.*,pp. 70-76.
[57] Dalloz, *op. cit.*, p. 392.

and national unity from a "fanatical and racist theocratic imperialism." They defended France's colonial presence in Algeria, claiming that if France had sinned it was not through the very act of colonialism but by doing too little, by insufficiently augmenting the level of civilization and modernity in the territory. It would be wrong, they said, to "avoid [their] responsibilities."[58]

USRAF and its texts reveal, too, what American historian Todd Shepard has pointed out and discussed in detail: that those who rallied behind the *Algérie française* cause were not only or even mostly far right "ultras" and fascists. Though the French far right played a key role in animating anti-FLN and anti-independence activism, these causes drew individuals from across the political spectrum, and they often "looked to the law, to the juridical codes and the legal tradition of the French Republic" to argue for their positions.[59] Of those who did constitute the far right of wing of *Algérie française*, many emerged from civilian milieus, beginning with those who formed "self-defense" groups in Algeria at the very beginning of the war. These groups' explicit goal was self-protection against FLN terrorism, though more often than not the activists pursued relatively aggressive forms of self-defense that essentially constituted counter-terrorist attacks against the Algerian population. A relatively small-scale phenomenon, these groups nonetheless incubated many of the civilian leaders who rose to prominence during the years of the mature *Algérie française* and the OAS: Georges Watin, Jean-Claude Pérez, Joseph Ortiz, and Robert Martel were among the most important.[60] But while the other main breeding ground for *Algérie française* activists, the French military, turned out far-right activists, it produced as many or more republican defenders of the anti-independence cause. While France's loss in the Indochina War had made many career military figures hardened opponents of decolonization, many of the most prominent military leaders of the anti-independence movement had firmly republican credentials (many had fought against Vichy in World War II, for instance).[61] These figures remained committed to the parliamentary system in France throughout the war. Thus, in general, though the *Algérie française* movement (and Bidault in particular) underwent a radicalization from 1954 to 1963 as the political landscape became more and more hostile to

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[58] "Appel pour le salut et le renouveau de l'Algérie française," Paris, April 1956, in the Bibliothèque de documentation internationale contemporaine (BDIC), F delta 880, Folder: Algérie 1956.
[59] Todd Shepard, *The Invention of Decolonization: The Algerian War and the Remaking of France*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press 2006, p. 83.
[60] Olivier Dard, *Voyage au cœur de l'OAS*, Perrin: Paris 2005, pp. 15-18. These activists largely drew on the example of self-defense groups formed by Europeans in Tunisia.
[61] Thénault, *op. cit.*, pp. 104-110.

their cause, for many the republican tradition and ideal remained among their most important political commitments.

Bidault's political statements and activities outside of USRAF largely confirmed the organization's official line. In his parliamentary address of March 20, 1957, he summed up with concision what he saw as the stakes of the Algerian conflict:

> Algeria, after all that we have lost since 1954—Indochina, the Indies, Morocco, Tunisia—even if, as we absolutely must believe, all has not been compromised where we still hold a few cards, though only on the condition that we wish to play them—Algeria is the final test and our last hope.
>
> Afterward, if we were to lose, we would have to rewrite our history books once again…we would have to abandon markets, and, even more troubling than economic stagnation, we would have to renounce that mission of which we are justly proud and that would have no possibility of continuation under our flag.
>
> Above all, we would leave men behind us, a European population of 1,200,000 inhabitants, for the most part French—in other words, it would virtually be Alsace-Lorraine of 1871.[62]

Bidault recognized the Algerian struggle as the latest step in the process of anti-colonial contestation through France's empire, but he saw this process as a tragedy that could only hurt France and its subject populations. His analysis mixes an evaluation of the economic interests at stake for France—market opportunities, for instance, and the lives and livelihoods of the *pieds-noirs*—with the lofty vision of France's bringing the allegedly superior material and cultural fruits of its civilization to those it colonized. His slippage between these two poles allows him to conflate the material benefits metropolitan France pulled from its empire with the civilizational benefits it hoped to impart to the its subject peoples. On this view, the colonial project is a tide that lifts all boats, both those of the colonizer and the colonized.

But Bidault's reference to Alsace-Lorraine is particularly striking, as it evokes, if indirectly, events that played an important role during World War II and the Liberation. The eastern French territories of Alsace and Lorraine traditionally contained a large culturally and linguistically German population, and in 1871 France lost the bulk of these territories to Germany, which retained control of them until the end of World War I, when they were returned to France. In World War II they were again a significant site of political and military conflict between France and Germany. Hitler annexed them to the Third Reich following France's defeat

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[62] Speech given by Georges Bidault to the French National Assembly on March 20, 1957, recorded in the *Journal Officiel de la République Française: Débats parlementaires de l'Assemblée nationale*, no. 38, March 21, 1957, p. 1749. The expression I have translated as "the final test and our last hope" is "*le dernier cran*."

in 1940, and their reclamation by French forces led by General Philippe Leclerc was for many a crowning moment of the Liberation. For Bidault to say that Algeria was a sort of North African Alsace-Lorraine was to efficiently communicate several things: that Algeria, despite its proximity to other states and other cultures, was truly and essentially part of France; that the foreign forces attempting to wrest it away from France were doing so on illegitimate grounds (here the FLN is compared to Germany); that France would not abandon its people and its territory and would take all military and political measures necessary to do so; and, perhaps, that where French citizens and French territory were concerned, no cause was ever fully lost, and that when such territory was lost to a foreign power, France would eventually recuperate it, even after the passage of many years. Bidault did not make explicit this last possible meaning, but by mentioning Alsace-Lorraine in particular he evoked the cause of an unyielding defense of a certain notion of France. His tenacity with respect to these points, which I will have occasion to examine in greater detail in the following chapters, was certainly consistent with this last possible meaning.

It is worth noting that Bidault's simultaneous defense of republican values and the colonial order had a long history in French politics. As early as the 1870s, a current within French republicanism "saw colonialism as an important yardstick…of their political success."[63] The final decades saw the development of the ideology of the *mission civilatrice* or "civilizing mission," the notion that France had a duty to spread its superior knowledge, culture, and political principles to "less civilized parts of the world." While he was no proponent of republican anticlericalism, Bidault's faith in republicanism and empire fit directly into this ideology tradition, which remained prominent in French politics well into the twentieth century. In fact, the Christian Democracy that framed Bidault's entire political life constituted a significant departure from the traditional conflict between republicans and Catholics, as it rested on the belief that Christian interests and values could be promoted through the parliamentary system. The Christian Democratic MRP both embraced the republican order of the post-World War II years and joined in the near-universal political consensus on the preservation of the French empire. As Martin Evans has discussed, in post-Liberation France "no issue produced a broader consensus than the need to retain the empire," though within this consensus there also

[63] J.P. Daughton, *An Empire Divided: Religion, Republicanism, and the Making of French Colonialism*, New York: Oxford University Press 2006, p. 10.

existed a widespread perception that "a new kind of association would have to be worked out between the empire and France."[64] To work out this new association, after World War II France created an Algerian Assembly, elected by two colleges. But the system provided colonized Algerians only a second-rate form of representation, and no meaningful reforms followed before the outbreak of war in 1954.

Bidault and his allies in USRAF grew in prominence throughout 1957, and the organization came to play an important role in the fall of the Fourth French Republic. Its members within the National Assembly were responsible for voting down two governments and thereby clearing the way in early 1958 for a possible government headed by prominent USRAF leaders, Bidault and Soustelle in particular. But the idea never truly got off the ground: many Socialists firmly opposed it, and, more strikingly, just over half of the MRP deputies in the Assembly voted against the idea. Lacking even the support of his own party, Bidault announced in April that he had abandoned the idea of forming a government.[65] Dramatic events in Algeria followed quickly on the heels of this high politics in Paris. *Algérie française* activists in the Algerian capital, increasingly frustrated with instability and volatility of French national politics and the state's inability to put an end to the war, began to ramp up their activity in May 1958, and on the 13th they put on a historic demonstration that saw the occupation of the main government buildings and the establishment of a Committee of Public Safety constituted by gaullists, officers, and various activists from Algiers. It was the gaullists who seized the moment and used it to return their General to power. Following constant calls by gaullists and their allies for de Gaulle's instatement as the head of government—and Bidault was among the first to call for the general's return—the government of Pierre Pflimlin was sworn in early on May 14, and within a month it handed the power and authority of the state to Charles de Gaulle.[66]

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[64] Evans, *The Memory of Resistance: French Opposition to the Algerian War (1954-1962)*, Oxford: Berg 1997, p. 33.

[65] Dalloz, *op. cit.*, pp. 393-395. The center of gravity of the MRP had slowly but steadily been drifting to the left in the early years of the Algerian War, and by the end of the Fourth Republic, more MRP deputies shied away from Bidault's dogged support of colonialism than supported it. He no doubt targeted these figures (among others) when he frequently excoriated "Christian progressives" in his memoirs.

[66] Dard, *op. cit.*, pp. 39-42. Bidault was one of the first to call for de Gaulle's return, in a letter he sent the general on April 14 and published in *Carrefour* a week later. (Letter from George Bidault to Charles de Gaulle, April 14, 1958, quoted in *Ibid.*, pp. 395-396.)

The Uncertain Fate of Algérie française: 1958-1963

Following de Gaulle's accession to power in 1958 and his election as the first President of the Fifth French Republic in early 1959, those who had called for his return enjoyed a brief period of hopefulness. In June of that year Bidault gave a speech before the Assembly in which he lauded the benefits of "integration," by which he and others meant a project of political inclusion and social and economic betterment aimed at the Algerian population.[67] Perfectly consistent with the reform tradition supported by successive French governments since the beginning of the war, Bidault and his integrationist allies saw this approach as the solution to the Algerian crisis, a way to treat as fully French people who were as much a part of France as Parisians or other metropolitan residents. But his speech also highlighted another concern intimately bound up in his French nationalism: his anti-communism. "In a world marked by currents of extreme violence and extreme simplicity," he said, it was essential to know whether de Gaulle's government, headed by Michel Debré, stood for "an integration that [would] take place from North to South, in the absence of which another integration would knit together East and West."[68] These cardinal directions opposed a French imperial unity that would bind Europe (France, in the North) to Africa (Algeria, the South) to a feared communist bloc, allying the Soviet Union in the East to the FLN in the West. For Bidault, the fight for France and French empire was synonymous with the fight against international communism, and as we will see, this was not the last time his analysis would relate France, Europe, Algeria, and communist powers in this way.

On September 16, 1959, de Gaulle outlined an evolution in his Algerian policy that dealt a blow to Bidault's hopes and aspirations. De Gaulle declared that the inhabitants of Algeria themselves would be given the opportunity to vote on whether and to what extent to remain a part associated with France, and Bidault immediately felt betrayed and incensed.[69] He responded to de Gaulle's "self-determination" speech three days later with the foundation of the

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[67] Over the course of 1958, Bidault, increasingly marginalized within his own party, broke from it to found a new Christian democratic formation known as the Christian Democracy of France (*Démocratie chrétienne de France*, DCF). (*Ibid.*, pp. 399-400.) He would serve his years as a Fifth Republic deputy under the DCF rather than the MRP, but the party never amounted to a significant political actor.

[68] Speech given by Georges Bidault to the French National Assembly on June 10, 1959, recorded in the *Journal Officiel de la République Française: Débats parlementaires de l'Assemblée nationale*, no. 34, June 11, 1959, pp. 861-862.

[69] Bidault, *op. cit.*, p. 237.

Rassemblement pour l'Algérie française, or RAF (the Rally for French Algeria). The RAF's goal was, in Bidault's words, "purely and simply to reject self-determination."[70] The group sought to rally all who supported *Algérie française*, regardless of any other political belonging, to fight "for the one and indivisible Republic…for the motherland, its prosperity, its independence, and its honor."[71] The RAF hardly lived up to this claim of broad representation. Surprisingly, a handful of deputies of the UNR (*Union pour la nouvelle république*, or Union for the New Republic; the gaullist party of the early Fifth Republic) became members, to their colleagues' disapproval. A very small number of academics joined, as did several of Bidault's Christian Democratic colleagues.[72] But the RAF drew mostly elected officials from North Africa, and it suffered from its perceived closeness to the far right—notably the *Front national français* (the French National Front, or FNF), a *pieds-noir* group also formed largely in opposition to the idea of "self-determination." When Bidault traveled to Algiers in December to establish an Algerian branch of the RAF, for instance, Joseph Ortiz and FNF forces provided security. It is difficult to say whether the RAF merited its extremist reputation. On one hand, it did cultivate connections with the FNF, and opposition to "secession" of Algeria and "the subversive war fought by Moscow" resonated with the language of the far right. On the other hand, many who favored radical measures to stop decolonization were dissatisfied with Bidault's political and pacific approach. Within the largely receptive crowds during his trip to Algiers, some among the hardcore of *Algérie française* expressed disappointment that he continued to practice only legal methods of opposition. The RAF thus sat at an awkward place in the political landscape; perceived as too radical by many of Bidault's political colleagues, it found little mass reception among *pieds-noirs*, who, moreover, could opt to join better-established organizations like the FNF. The RAF thus failed to grow into a significant organization, and it earned him few friends within the state; from early 1960 onward he was forbidden to return to North Africa.[73]

Events in Algeria continued to evolve, largely outside of Bidault's influence. The FNF began to organize for street protests, and a demonstration that began in late January 1960 quickly turned into a confrontation between activists and military and security forces, with protestors

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[70] *Ibid.*
[71] Dalloz, *op. cit.*, pp. 410-414.
[72] The most important of the academics who joined was the economist Jean Chardonnet, who go on to be one of the more prominent members of the Vincennes Committee (discussed below). Of the Christian Democrats, Joseph Hours, one of Bidault's fellow resisters and a co-founder of the MRP, was the most important to joined the RAF. (*Ibid.*)
[73] *Ibid.*

erecting barricades in the streets of the capital. Activists like Joseph Ortiz, Jean-Claude Pérez, Jacques Lagaillarde, and Jean-Jacques Susini attempted to turn the event into a mass uprising, but the army, a critical would-be ally, failed to join them. Tensions continued to mount, peaking when the army opened fire on protestors on January 24. The days of the barricades were no new May 13, as many activists had hoped; rifts between officers and activists grew, and after further political maneuvering in the following days, the barricades were dismantled and some of the organizers and executors of the protest arrested.[74]

Subsequent to this failure, the next major evolution of *Algérie française* came on June 20, 1960, when the first "Vincennes Conference" was held. Named for the wealthy Paris suburb in which it took place, this conference brought together one of the largest groupings to date of metropolitan partisans of *Algérie française*, including Bidault and Jacques Soustelle, who had recently resigned from the government over its handling of the events of the barricades. The conference transformed the grouping into a more permanent "committee" committed to four basic principles: an affirmation Algeria was "a land under French sovereignty" that "must remain part of the integral territory of the Republic"; the rejection of any sort of "Algerian Algeria [as opposed to French Algeria]," which "would lead fatally to secession and to the dictatorship of terrorism"; opposition to "any negotiation, which would lead automatically to secession, i.e., to catastrophe"; and a call to "all the French to unit and bring about the triumph of the democracy and fraternity of all the French, to the north and the south of the Mediterranean, regardless of the [religious or social] community to which they belong, within a single fatherland."[75] The Committee would meet only a handful of times throughout 1960 and 1961 before being banned by the state in November 1961, but it sustained and increased Bidault's authority as one of the top leaders of *Algérie française* within the political class. The Committee was not a mass organization, but it did draw together several hundred of the most important metropolitan figures who supported the anti-independence cause. Among these, only Soustelle rivaled Bidault in prominence and credibility. Bidault's importance thus made him an asset to the Committee, which had become the only *Algérie française* organization of any importance in the metropole.

[74] Dard, *op. cit.*, pp. 46-68.
[75] Dalloz, *op. cit.*, p. 415.

But in 1961, an organization that would overshadow the Vincennes Committee took shape on Algerian soil: the *Organisation Armée Secrète* (OAS, Secret Army Organization).[76] Formed in the wake of a failed generals' coup in Algiers in 1961 (during which the "putschists," as they came to be known, failed to acquire sufficient support both within the military and in the general population), the OAS united a core of increasingly bitter officers with civilian leaders, generally those *pieds-noirs* who had gained power and notoriety within the various successors to the self-defense groups of 1954-1956 and during events like the those of the barricades. Jean-Jacques Susini, Pierre Lagaillarde, and Joseph Ortiz, for instance, figured among these civilians, while prominent military members included colonels like colonels Yves Godard, Antoine Argoud and Charles Lacheroy and generals Edmond Jouhaud, Paul Gardy, and Raoul Salan. Salan, a former commander in chief in Algeria and one of the leaders of the putsch, served as the organization's leader until his arrest in April 1962, about one year after the foundation of the OAS.[77]

Though feared in its time for the violent acts it perpetrated on behalf of *Algérie française*, the OAS was beset throughout its existence by ideological divisions, organizational instability, and an inability to agree on the proper means by which to pursue its fight. It was in many ways a last resort, a coalition of diverse forces dedicated to maintaining a French Algeria at all costs and pushed into clandestine struggle to accomplish this goal. Their cause already seriously imperiled, the various actors who made up the organization participated in a sort of marriage of necessity. Due in large part to its ideological heterogeneity, the OAS's propaganda activity remained relatively weak, and it struggled to develop means beyond bombings of certain strategic or symbolic individuals or places to manifest its presence and accomplish its goals.[78] Despite a moment of temporary strength in late 1961-early 1962, the organization remained hobbled by organizational and financial difficulties, which were exacerbated by a counter-terrorism campaigned launched against the OAS by the French state.[79] Through a series of arrests and attacks by French secret agents nicknamed *barbouzes*, the gaullist regime largely succeeded in dismantling the OAS, which by early to mid-1962 had been overtaken by the reality

[76] For one of the better accounts of the origins and the institutional and ideological development of the OAS, see Olivier Dard, *op. cit.*.
[77] *Ibid.*, pp. 83-91.
[78] *Ibid.*, pp. 93-110.
[79] *Ibid.*,pp. 275-289.

of Algerian independence (officially on July 5, 1962) and lost the bulk of its capacity to act in any meaningful way.

But this setback was not quite the end of the story for the OAS, in part because of the rise in 1962 of Georges Bidault's last significant political project: the new *Conseil national de la Résistance*. Beginning in October 1962, nearly a month before the banning of the Vincennes Committee, Bidault set to work laying the organizational foundations of his new Resistance Council.[80] He would not reveal the new organization for some months, but his activities and comments over that period of time hinted that his political activity was undergoing a shift. Near the end of November, for instance, speaking at a private meeting of the DCF, he reputedly remarked: "I am neither a prophet nor a conspirator, but this regime cannot possibly last, and I believe that things should change soon. […] I don't wish for [de Gaulle's] death, but one must be firm and pitiless toward he who has lied." More significantly, during press conferences and interviews he began to make favorable comments about Salan (a "wise, courageous, and careful man," according to Bidault) and to hint at his dissatisfaction with continuing exclusively legal methods of resistance: "When I see the executive violate the law, I can guarantee absolutely nothing about what happens next." In February 1962 he slipped out of France and spent the next two months in neighboring countries, making little noise. Only on April 11, 1962, did he announce the creation of the new CNR, through a letter to the press bearing his signature.[81] The announcement followed the referendum of April 8 in which a solid majority of metropolitan French voted to approve Algerian independence (an outcome Bidault attributed to French communist voter mobilization).[82] On May 20, Bidault met in Milan with Jacques Soustelle, Antoine Argoud and Pierre Sergent, among several others. The latter two, having pursued *Algérie française* activism within the OAS, now rallied to Bidault's new CNR, which now competed for prominence with the weakened *organization armée*. The group established an executive committee for the organization, which consisted of Bidault as President, Soustelle (Vice-President), and Argoud. The new CNR was on its feet.[83]

Chapter Three will follow in greater detail the development of the second CNR, but broadly speaking it spent the vast majority of its existence churning out anti-gaullist propaganda

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[80] *Ibid.*,p. 184.
[81] "Activité de M. George BIDAULT depuis la création du Comité de Vincennes," police summary, April 17, 1962, in the BDIC, Jacques Delarue Collection, F delta res 896, Folder 7.
[82] Bidault, *op. cit.*, p. 272.
[83] Dard, *op. cit.*, p. 320.

and searching for its own political program. Like the OAS, the CNR suffered from ideological divisions, funding problems, and a political environment increasingly hostile to its cause. The Evian Accords had already made Algerian independence official, and Bidault and the CNR were thus fighting an uphill battle for a cause that, to all appearances, was already lost. The Resistance Council flirted with the idea of assassinating de Gaulle, but it never organized anything close to an attempt, and Bidault put an end to such plans following a failed attempt to assassinate the President of the Republic by OAS activist Jean-Marie Bastien-Thiry in August 1962. Officially banned by the state in September, a moment of hope arose in November when representatives of the CNR and the OAS (headed by General Gardy since Salan's arrest) met in Lisbon to discuss the possibility of greater cooperation. Officially the "Lisbon Congress" was a success—according to a communiqué released by Gardy on November 13, "[t]he rallying, without reservation, to the CNR of the combat units of the former OAS-Algeria is henceforth complete"—but according to Olivier Dard, the talks resulted in little change on a practical level.[84] Despite a few impressive appearances in the media in early 1963—Bidault's BBC interview was filmed in January and aired in early March—the CNR's days were numbered. In February 1963, Argoud was arrested in Munich by gaullist secret agents, and with him the CNR lost a key member. Bidault, unable to find political welcome or asylum in several European countries, was eventually forced into exile in Brazil. With Jacques Soustelle isolated in Italy, Pierre Sergent was now the most senior member of the CNR. He changed its name to the *Conseil national de la Révolution* and reoriented much of its politics. This reinvention of the CNR marked the moment at which it became altogether politically irrelevant and brought an end to Bidault's resistancialist project.[85]

Conclusion

Though Bidault's second CNR remained a relatively weak organization for the duration of its existence, it was not without political and historical importance. Bidault partially succeeded in challenging the hegemony of the OAS with the *Algérie française* movement, the dynamics of which I will explore in Chapter Three. But he also evoked the anti-Nazi Resistance to justify and organize his project with unparalleled sophistication among partisans of *Algérie*

[84] *Ibid.*, pp. 321-326.
[85] *Ibid.*, pp. 326-329.

française. He was not the only opponent of Algerian independence to draw on the memory and language of the Resistance, but he did so in a way that reshaped the landscape of the *Algérie française* cause and was perhaps the last major political figure of the era to do so. His new Resistance Council was a strange reminder of the roots that contemporary events—from the return of de Gaulle to the fact of decolonization—had in the World War II era and that political issues that arose or deepened in that era continued to be worked out decades later. For these reasons, Bidault's evocation and use of the Resistance—its content, its development over time, and the ways in which it responded to contemporary political realities—deserve detailed attention.

II

Against the Wind of History

Bidault's Re-Imagining of the Resistance

In mid-1965, three years into his exile in Brazil and during campaign season for France's first presidential elections since the end of the Algerian War, Georges Bidault published his political memoirs, *From One Resistance To the Other*. This polemical text, which crowned Bidault's oppositional politics of the early 1960s, laid out his version of recent French political history, from World War II and the Resistance to the Algerian War. He pushed back against the idea of this work as a definitive account or his personal memoirs; in exile, he said, he could write no such account. Rather, he wrote in the opening sentences of the preface,

> This work is my testimony. If for no other reason, this story is worthy of attention because it comes from a man whose actions sprang from his convictions. At a time when vulgar conformism is dressed up with the name "wind of history," in a country where politics is limited to petty squabbling because people no longer have enough faith in their flag, or what it represents, to endanger the comfort of their lives or their ration of soup, I maintain that I have taken the risks imposed by my fidelity to my commitments.[86]

These lines convey much of the spirit that animated Bidault's text: he saw himself as one of the faithful few, defending his nation in an era of widespread decadence. This passage delivered a forceful moral message, one that lay at the heart of Bidault's renewed vision of the Resistance. But his scorn for the idea of the "wind of history"—essentially, of being on the "right side" of history, where the wind is blowing—also hints at his sense of the deep importance of history and its connection to the political present.[87] Bidault's texts, speeches, and interviews from the 1950s and 1960s demonstrate a consciousness of himself as a historically situated actor. He believed that knowledge of history was essential to proper moral and political conduct in the present and that his present actions and those of his fellow French were far from insignificant. Rather, they bore on the future course of the French polity. To that end, certain events and entities in French history—the most powerful kings of the medieval period, the Revolution, the republican tradition and the Resistance—served as landmarks for comparison to current events

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[86] Georges Bidault, *D'une résistance à l'autre*, Paris: Siècle 1965, pp. 9-10.

[87] The idea of the *vent d'histoire* or "wind of history" was a term de Gaulle invoked to characterize the inevitability of decolonization in Algeria, and Bidault in turn targeted this language as both a misunderstanding of how history operates and an abdication of responsibility for the eventual independence of Algeria.

and as a moral standard against which to evaluate his own actions. He saw in the story of the French nation heroes and villains, people and principles that had made France great as well as enemies and traitors who had threatened (but never quite destroyed) this greatness. For Bidault did not see French history as a simple sequence of events but as a national narrative imbued with moral content. On this view and precisely because of this moral dimension, the choices of groups and individuals constituted not the sum total of impersonal and irreversible forces but rather the motor of history. Bidault believed that all people were accountable for their actions and ought to take responsibility for their duty to the nation—or their failure to uphold that duty.

In this chapter, I will examine the ways in which Bidault took the most recent of these historical references—the Resistance—and re-envisioned it. By claiming that the same principles that had animated the fight against Nazi occupation justified the fight against Algerian independence, Bidault attempted to frame the cause of *Algérie française* as a patriotic impulse and a defense of the French Motherland. Bidault saw the Resistance as a useful tool in this sense because he understood it as the most recent instance of fidelity to the French values of liberty and republicanism. It served as a reference upon which he and many others drew to make sense of the Algerian War, though there was no single, unanimously accepted version of the history of the Resistance or its pertinence to the current moment. It was open to contestation and reformulation by competing social and political actors. Even immediately following the Liberation, no definite version of the events and significance of the Resistance existed, but contestation of this memory and the uses to which it was put became particularly intense and varied in the years of the Algerian War, a period that emphasized the "ambivalent legacy of the Resistance," in the words of Rod Kedward.[88] During this time, many groups mobilized the memory of the Resistance in support of varying, even diametrically opposed, political causes. Anti-war, pro-independence, and pro-FLN actors like the *porteurs de valises* situated their politics within the Resistance tradition, while even the partisans of *Algérie française*, most notably the OAS, drew on the Resistance to justify their actions. The possibility of mobilizing this history for such a diverse range of actors and positions stemmed from the complexity of the Resistance itself as a historical phenomenon. It had grouped together a wide range of actors with as many political commitments and strategies, and the form it took evolved over the course of the Second World War. Political and social actors during the Algerian War could thus draw on

[88] Rod Kedward, *La Vie en Bleu: France and the French Since 1900*, New York: Allen Lane 2005, p. 341.

those aspects of the anti-Nazi Resistance that best served their goals, emphasizing certain facets and downplaying others that might conflict with or contradict their politics.

In this context, to evoke the Resistance was to deploy it as a political weapon, and Bidault thus faced certain choices in his formulation of the Resistance and its legacy. Both to rally his fellow *Algérie française* allies behind his version and to distinguish himself from his political enemies and competitors, Bidault developed an image of his "new" Resistance as the defender of the territorial integrity and Republican principles of France against the "gaullo-communist collusion."[89] On this view, de Gaulle and his willingness to accede to Algerian independence represented the greatest threat to France; the "amputation" of Algeria, a portion of the "national territory," would allow communist forces to take hold there and threaten France, the bastion of not only republicanism but also Christian civilization. Moreover, Bidault saw the increasing power of the French executive under de Gaulle as akin to the rise of the Vichy regime of the 1940s, and he condemned de Gaulle's liberal use of police forces and detention camps as the fascistic excesses of a treacherous leader. By drawing these comparisons between the 1940s and contemporary political developments, Bidault was able to reformulate his anti-gaullist, anti-communist, and anti-independence politics as a patriotic and resistancialist defense of the French nation.

Such a move was not, however, without its difficulties. Bidault generally avoided a detailed reconstruction of the anti-Nazi Resistance of the 1940s and instead defined the Resistance as a "state of mind" and a commitment to certain values that could be translated into political action whenever the appropriate sort of threat—Nazis and the Vichy regime in the 1940s, and de Gaulle and the FLN in the 1950s and 1960s—presented itself. This choice freed up the idea of the Resistance as a political and rhetorical weapon available in the context of the Algerian conflict, but it also de-historicized the Resistance, uprooting it from the particular historical and social context in which it emerged and developed. Bidault thus privileged the profession of abstract values over an attention to the actual events of the Resistance, particularly those that conflicted with his professed present-day resistancialist values. In particular, the important role of French communists in the anti-Nazi Resistance conflicted with his use of the Resistance as a vehicle of anti-communism. But in spite of these difficulties, the new vision that

[89] The phrase "gaullo-communist collusion" comes from an official statement of the second CNR, dated August 29, 1962; in the Bibliothèque de documentation contemporaine internationale (BDIC), Jacques Delarue Collection, F delta res 939/2, Folder 8: Conseil National de la Résistance, 28 Novembre 1961 – 5 janvier 1963.

Bidault outlined constituted the most sophisticated repurposing of the Resistance by any *Algérie française* leader, and it deserves to be analyzed in detail.

Uses of the Resistance During the Algerian War: 1954-1962

When the Algerian War broke out in late 1954, World War II was still fresh in French public consciousness. The Liberation had taken place only a decade earlier, and huge swaths of the population, from ordinary families and workers to military officers and the political class, still remembered the "dark years" of the early 1940s that had transformed France. In this environment, the events of World War II were readily available as reference points for political actors during the Algerian War. Very early in the war individuals began to compare the current war to that of the 1940s, though the ways in which they did so varied. Critics of the use of French army's use of violence against rebel fighters as well as the civilian population of Algeria compared these practices to Nazi acts of torture. François Mauriac, Claude Bourdet, and others published texts as early as 1955 that, as Sylvie Thénault says, "made use of *historical references to the Gestapo* and the Ancien Régime" to denounce "the practice of torture as beyond the republican pale."[90] Such comparisons defined republicanism, at least in part, as the limited and legitimate use of violence in wartime, as opposed to torture and other forms of fascistic excess. Other observers inverted the terms of the comparison, characterizing the FLN as a violent and fascistic force whose threat to the French nation and republican liberties in Algeria echoed that of the Nazis. Here, France, as an ideal, still represented republicanism and a rejection of torture, but the French military was not seen as having exceeded republican limits; rather, it signified a precious political tradition threatened by the illiberal violence of Algerian nationalists.

Jacques Soustelle adopted the latter position early, in a 1955 open letter entitled "Letter From One Intellectual to Several Others." Though at the time he was serving as Governor General of Algeria, Soustelle drew on his status as an ethnologist to target French intellectuals who had critiqued French conduct in the war. He focused in particular on those who compared the conduct of the French military to that of the *Wehrmacht* or the Gestapo, painting such critiques as intellectually dishonest and pathetic. According to Soustelle, a frank examination of the events in Algeria would lead to the recognition that they did not even merit the name "war"

[90] Sylvie Thénault, *Histoire de la guerre d'indépendance algérienne*, Paris: Flammarion 2005, p. 160. Emphasis mine.

and that any comparison between French troops and Nazis was baseless.[91] "I know," he wrote, "that French troops are not killers and that we do not have the right to insult them gratuitously by comparing them to the SS."[92] If anyone ought to have been compared to the Nazis, it was the Algerian rebels. Soustelle went on to lament, "I remember a time when French intellectuals pushed back against the ferocious obscurantism of Hitler, which is without a doubt the contemporary movement that resembles most closely, by its exclusivity and disdain for human life, the totalitarian absolutism of the CRUA." While for Soustelle the CRUA—the *Comité Révolutionnaire d'Unité et d'Action* (the Revolutionary Committee for Unity and Action), the immediate predecessor of the FLN—represented an embrace of torture and "racial and religious hatred against the non-Muslim," French values stood diametrically opposed to such intolerance.[93] This rejection of intolerance appeared to him the very essence of the French national spirit and of the effort to put down the nationalist rebellion in Algeria.

Soustelle's letter shows how the evocation of the "dark years" of 1940-1944 as an instrument of politics dated from the earliest years of the Algerian War. The memory of these years served as another "battlefield" of the war, in which opposing forces within France fought over the meaning of this period for current events. But this letter also makes it clear that those who evoked the past did not necessarily privilege the Resistance over other events. Soustelle did use the word "resistance" to characterize French repression of the Algerian rebels, and he referred to his participation in the gaullist exterior Resistance from 1940-1944, but he positioned these references among others, even those that evoked the late 1930s:

> As for me, I am among those who rose up between 1936 and 1940 against the peril of internal and external dictatorships, against racism and intolerance: I have not changed. I fought against the spirit of defeat and abandonment that led France to abandon Czechoslovakia, that allowed Hitler's remilitarization of the Rhineland, that let the Axis emerge and consolidate itself in the face of the disarming of the democracies: I have not changed.[94]

Soustelle's primary reference is not the interior Resistance in particular but anti-fascism, and this focus allows him to draw references both from World War II and the pre-war period. But he also

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[91] The *Wehrmacht* was the name of the German armed forces during World War II, while the Gestapo was the Nazi secret police in Germany and the countries it occupied during the war. Relatedly, the *Schutzstaffel*, or SS, was a paramilitary organization controlled by the Nazi party and Hitler in particular.
[92] Jacques Soustelle, "Lettre d'un intellectuel à quelques autres," November 14, 1955, pp. 1-3, quote p. 3, in the BDIC, F delta 880, Folder: Algérie 1955.
[93] *Ibid.*, p. 3.
[94] *Ibid.*, p. 4.

uses his own role in the events of the 1930s and 1940s and his repetition of the phrase "I have not changed" to give credibility to his comparison.[95] While the details of each war and each period may have differed, he saw the contemporary problems facing France as of the same political and moral order and believed that French intellectuals needed to respond just as they had before: by opposing racism, intolerance, and totalitarianism.

Some, however, did adopt the Resistance as their primary historical reference. In some cases this practice dated from the earliest years of the conflict, but it became more widespread as more and more people—from ordinary French citizens to political and military leaders, though never more than a small minority of the population—became disaffected with the France's handling of the war. The language of the Resistance was indeed a language of opposition, but an opposition constituted by forces outside the state that felt they lacked the means to express their political will through conventional, legal channels. It signaled a perceived breakdown of the democratic process and the belief that a commitment to core French values could be maintained only by challenging the state and the law, openly or secretly. It had not always been thus. In the period directly following World War II, gaullist political actors dominated the use of the Resistance as a political reference, effectively claiming the legacy of an oppositional movement to justify their uses of state power and discredit their opponents. The postwar gaullist political party, the Rally of the French People (*Rassemblement du peuple français*, RPF), constituted the main vehicle for this activity, from roughly 1947 until the outbreak of the Algerian War. The RPF claimed the legacy of the Resistance as its own, playing up the role of Free France and using this legacy to smear its enemies (mostly the PCF, but also other political parties and what de Gaulle saw as the excessively fractured "system" in general). Other forces, notably communists, also tried to shape the memory of the Resistance in their own favor, but the memorial landscape of these years was defined by gaullist monopolization of this memory as a political tool.[96]

The "new resisters" of the Algerian War disrupted this trend in national memory of the Resistance, but even within this category of actors there was enormous disagreement about what the Resistance meant for contemporary times. The watchwords of the Resistance, like "honor," "loyalty," and "sacrifice" were broad and undetermined, and what constituted "core French

[95] "I have not changed" also drew on Soustelle's own participation in the anti-Nazi fight to boost his credibility.
[96] Henry Rousso, "La Second Guerre Mondiale dans la mémoire de droites," in *Histoire des droites en France*, Paris: Gallimard 1992, vol. 2, pp. 577-582.

values" or the proper means to preserve them was up for interpretation by the various actors who evoked the Resistance. In part, this diverse span of interpretations emerged from the complexities of the Resistance itself as a historical phenomenon. As discussed in the previous chapter, the anti-Nazi Resistance of the 1940s united an extremely diverse coalition of actors whose political commitments and aspirations varied widely. Though united behind a consensus on the necessity of expelling the German occupier and opposing torture, as Olivier Wieviorka has shown, "nationalists and communists, Christians and atheists, socialists and Maurassians [a far-right tendency] had little in common," and the "Resistance did not manage to translate ethical values like courage, honesty and justice into positive norms…[or] a political program."[97] There was never a simple and unitary "politics of Resistance." Even in the 1940s, "Resistance" was a largely moral watchword capable of rallying individuals from across the political spectrum, and the situation remained unchanged during the Algerian War.

With a key difference: the new "resisters" of the 1950s and early 1960s lacked their predecessors' agreement on a common enemy. Again, while all those who evoked the Resistance categorized their activity as a patriotic defense of French republican values from a totalitarian or fascistic threat, each actor defined the nature of this patriotism and the identity of this threat differently. The nature of the Algerian conflict, a war of national independence in a colony heavily peopled by settlers of European descent, also differed structurally from World War II, which for France involved a foreign occupation in the context of European and global theaters of war. These ambiguities and differences forced those who evoked the Resistance to redefine it to fit contemporary circumstances, and, broadly speaking, political actors responded to the situation in three main ways: by focusing on a critique of the government's use of torture; by linking the Resistance to anti-colonialism and aiding the Algerian independence effort; and by linking the Resistance to a *defense* of colonialism and fighting against Algerian independence.

The publishing house *Les Éditions de Minuit* (Midnight Publishing), run by Jérôme Lindon, represented perhaps the most moderate approach, which consisted of a critique of the abuses committed by the army and eventually a defense of the right of soldiers to refuse orders or even desert. Already notable for its clandestine publishing work during the anti-Nazi Resistance, Minuit found itself publishing increasingly radical critiques of the French

[97] Olivier Wieviorka, *Une certaine idée de la Résistance: Défense de la France 1940-1949*, Paris: Seuil 1995, p. 414.

government during the Algerian War. Lindon and his staff—which included the young historian Pierre Vidal-Naquet—began in 1958 by releasing texts that critiqued torture (like Maurice Alleg's *La Question* and *La Gangrène*).[98] As the war continued, Lindon became bolder, selecting works that advanced more radical critiques. This process peaked in 1960 with the publication of *The Manifesto of the 121*, a statement signed by 121 intellectuals that defended soldiers' right to insubordination. "This text," says historian Anne Simonin, "is neither a call for insubordination nor a call for disobedience—the word does not appear—but a call to those who judge acts labeled as disobedience or insubordination."[99] Lindon consciously situated all of his Minuit activity in the Resistance tradition: he sought to "reactualize the subversive power of the Resistance: linking different wars and eras, he made disobedient soldiers of the Algerian War the direct descendants of those who resisted Nazi and Vichy oppression during the Second World War."[100] The Resistance also "oriented the fight of the publisher by centering it on the denunciation of torture."[101] For Lindon, this focus served as the moral ground of his resistancialist activity and underlay texts like *The Manifesto*. But calls like this one had little effect within the army—there is no evidence of anything like mass disobedience or desertion—and they divided the political left, which recognized that anything resembling a call for disobedience implied the illegitimacy of the gaullist regime. Many were fearful of framing their politics in such radical terms, and the resistancialist justification of disobedience thus failed to gain a foothold within the socialist and communist parties of the traditional left.[102]

A small number of ordinary citizens took a more radical stance as they evoked the Resistance, working actively but clandestinely to support Algerian independence. These were the *porteurs de valises*, as they came to be known, the "suitcase carriers" who numbered only in the hundreds but who materially aided the FLN in France, most notably by funneling funds raised by Algerian immigrants in France to the Liberation Front's command in North Africa. Their faith in the justice of the independence cause was so strong that they believed clandestine and illegal activity justified in the pursuit of this goal. The memory of the Resistance weighed heavily on their understanding of their actions. In Rod Kedward's words, "If the defence of this

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[98] Anne Simonin, *Le Droit de Désobéissance, Les Éditions de Minuit en guerre d'Algérie*, Paris: Minuit 2012, pp. 7-21.
[99] *Ibid.*, pp. 50-51.
[100] *Ibid.*, p. 38.
[101] *Ibid.*, p. 40.
[102] Olivier Wieviorka, "Les (non) incidences du procès de Nuremberg : l'affaires des '121,'" in Annette Wieviorka (ed.), *Les Procès de Nuremberg et de Tokyo*, Bruxelles: André Versailles 2010, pp. 301-302.

cause involved acts of civil disobedience, then that too had its precedent in the acts of illegality undertaken by resisters in the name of patriotism and a higher form of justice."[103] Even more significant, despite their engagement on behalf of the FLN, the vast majority of *porteurs de valises* saw their activity as a "reassert[ion of] the authentic voice of France." As Martin Evans has noted in his oral history of these militants, "What they thought French values really were or should be, and the manner in which these values were being perverted by events in Algeria, was a key component of motivations."[104] They thus drew on the Resistance as a patriotic phenomenon and understood their civil disobedience as a defense of core French values that the state was unable or unwilling to uphold.

Both of these neo-Resistance tendencies emerged during the first period of the war, prior to de Gaulle's return to power, and they both took relatively "left-leaning" stances toward the conflict, either against French conduct in the war or in favor of Algerian independence. But de Gaulle's return and his turn toward decolonization opened the possibility of a right-wing deployment of the Resistance.[105] Within *Algérie française*, as we have seen, the reference first emerged within the OAS, whose name recalled clandestine militias from the 1940s who fought the Nazi occupation. As with the *Éditions de Minuit* and the *porteurs de valises*, recourse to the memory of the Resistance became attractive to partisans of *Algérie française* as a sort of last restor, when they found their other means political engagement and protest no longer sufficient. Only after the failed revolt of the barricades and the putsch of 1961 did the hard core of *Algérie française* adopt the Resistance as an explicit and central reference. The message was clear: by clandestine, armed struggle alone could the faithful patriots oppose and turn back the illegitimate attempt by the gaullist regime to cast off a portion of the national territory and the citizenry.

Prior to Bidault's arrival on the scene, however, the *Algérie française* reference to the anti-Nazi Resistance remained little more than a slogan. The OAS did not develop it into a more elaborate comparison between World War II and the Algerian War or explore in greater detail how the principles and the legacy of the Resistance might bear on a defense of *Algérie française*. Only once the power of the OAS began to wane under gaullist repression and Bidault challenged

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[103] Kedward, *op. cit.*, p. 341.
[104] Martin Evans, *The Memory of Resistance: French Opposition to the Algerian War (1954-1962)*, Oxford: Berg 1997, p. 31.
[105] Kedward, *op. cit.*, p. 341.

its dominance through his new CNR did the Resistance become the most important historical reference for and the dominant political discourse of *Algérie française*.

Bidault's Re-Imagining of the Resistance: The Early Stages, 1954-1962

In the early 1950s and in the first years of the Algerian War, the Resistance did not constitute a central element of Georges Bidault's political discourse. Though always fond of historical references in the elaboration of his arguments, Bidault expressed his opposition to decolonization, in Algeria and elsewhere, primarily in contemporary terms. When he did discuss the Resistance, he did so without connecting it directly (or at all) to the political realities of the moment. In 1954, for instance, in the very period when the conflict in Indochina gave way to the war in Algeria, Bidault wrote a short preface to a work entitled *The Political and Social Ideas of the Resistance: Clandestine Documents*, *1940-1944*.[106] As the former president of the World War II CNR, he explained that this text addressed "what the Resistance was above all else: a state of mind coupled to an act of faith":

> A state of mind: the refusal of dishonor, of collaboration, of the temporary conveniences of the Vichy regime: the refusal of despair before the hardships that burdened the motherland.
>
> An act of faith: faith in the grandeur of France and in human dignity, faith in a few virtues preserved at great risk: honor, courage, selflessness, the spirit of sacrifice, the love of freedom.[107]

Aside from the reference to Vichy, Bidault here expressed his understanding of the Resistance in abstract terms: as a "state of mind" and a set of principles at the heart of the French nation and which the patriot upholds in all circumstances, however desperate or hopeless. He would carry over much of this language in his reformulation of the Resistance in the 1960s, but at that point he would give it richer political content by connecting it to the Algerian War. At this stage of the decolonization of the French empire, he had not yet called for a reactivation of the Resistance "state of mind" or a new application of its principles (as he understood them) to current realities. Even as he saw the Resistance as a timeless state of mind, Bidault still spoke of it as a phenomenon of the past rather than an ongoing process.

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[106] Michel Henri and Boris Mirkine-Guetzévitch (eds.), *Les idées politiques et sociales de la Résistance (Documents clandestins—1940-1944)*, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France 1954.
[107] *Ibid.*, v.

The situation began to change during the events of May 1958. As pro-*Algérie française* military and civilian forces took to the streets of Algiers and issued increasingly forceful calls for the return of de Gaulle, Bidault was among the first to entreat the former leader of Free France to rescue France from crisis. On May 14 he addressed a private letter to the general:

> I believe myself permitted, and I believe it my duty, toward you at this hour when…the aggravation of the risks run by the nation can only checked by you. […] It is because I lived the days of pain and of combat when you were the leader of Free France, your companion in battle and in hope. It is the second and final President of the National Council of Resistance who implores you to throw in the balance, at the time and in the form that you judge best, the weight of your name and your word, for the safety of our imperiled country.[108]

Bidault published the letter in *Carrefour* a week later, thereby making public his first effort to connect the Resistance to contemporary events. By drawing on his status as former President of the CNR and his past collaboration with de Gaulle, he framed the current moment in French politics as a crisis that could only be resolved by extraordinary means akin to those of the exterior and interior Resistance of the 1940s. But because his letter was a personal appeal to de Gaulle, his references to the Resistance functioned on a "private" and personal level more than a political one, despite Bidault's publication of the letter. He aimed simply to convince de Gaulle to return to power, seeing the general as the only person with sufficient legitimacy and commitment to France to save the nation.

In the early years of the Fifth Republic, Bidault's references to the Resistance remained infrequent, and they continued to operate along lines similar to those established in his letter to de Gaulle. In June 1959, when Bidault and much of *Algérie française* still held high hopes for de Gaulle as an opponent of Algerian independence, Bidault delivered a parliamentary address in favor of integrationist policies in Algeria to applause from parliamentary deputies across the political spectrum. Sensitive to controversy over what the word "integration" might imply, he cautioned: "I do not wish to resuscitate…quarrels over semantics. […] We are not dealing here with [political] slogans, although there was a time when a few [slogans] were dear to us, in the shadow and years of a fight now nearly forgotten—we were there together, Mr. Prime Minister [Michel Debré]—and what one might call "slogans" reached us over the crackling of the radio,

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[108] Letter from George Bidault to Charles de Gaulle, April 14, 1958, quoted in Dalloz, *Georges Bidault: Biographie politique*, Paris: Harmattan 1992, pp. 395-396.

thanks to which the survivors of so many deaths reached the dawn of the Liberation."[109] This reference operated on much the same level as that from Bidault's letter to de Gaulle: it expressed a personal solidarity with Debré on the basis of a shared struggle and alluded the legitimacy the two of them enjoyed by virtue of their participation in that struggle.

After de Gaulle delivered his self-determination speech, Bidault turned bitterly against him, but the shift to an emphasis on the Resistance came only with a delay. Bidault's parliamentary addresses garnered much less applause from his listeners, particularly deputies of the Left who often took to heckling him. But by late 1960, just over a year after the announcement of the policy of self-determination, references to the Resistance began increasingly to creep into Bidault's texts and speeches. In December of that year, Bidault delivered an address before the Assembly that drew explicit comparisons between the Algerian War and World War II. In response to those who accused him of extremism in his tenacious defense of *Algérie française*, he related a story in which Jean Moulin, shortly before his death in 1943, had allegedly told him, "Don't repeat this, but there will be no [Allied naval] landing this year." "The wait," said Bidault, "was endless, but at that moment the order was to be an extremist. And so we went on, day after day, for the independence of the motherland and the integrity of the territory."[110] On this view, both wars might seem or have seemed interminable, but fidelity to the core principles of one's country would always pay off. Like *Algérie française*, anti-Nazi resisters constituted a minority, and Bidault suggested that being tarred with the brush of extremism said more about his minority status than it did about how reactionary his political commitments might be.

But, in a modest but important elaboration of this final point, Bidault deepened his comparison between the events of the 1940s and those of the early Fifth Republic:

> For me, the Republic is one and indivisible. I wish, we all wish for the best for a Community without ties or structure [i.e., a proposed reorganization of the French empire without any colonial or territorial hierarchies]. But there is, whatever the wind of history may be…something that we will never accept and that *does not even have the excuse of defeat and occupation*: yet greater alienation from our national

[109] Speech given by Georges Bidault to the French National Assembly on June 10, 1959, recorded in the *Journal Officiel de la République Française: Débats parlementaires de l'Assemblée nationale*, no. 34, June 11, 1959, p. 861.
[110] Speech given by Georges Bidault to the French National Assembly on December 7, 1960, recorded in the *Journal Officiel de la République Française: Débats parlementaires de l'Assemblée nationale*, no. 101, December 8, 1960, p. 4410.

> heritage, of this heritage that does not belong only to the living and that the living, who have received it from the dead, must as their first duty pass on, protected and intact, to the following generation.[111]

This dense paragraph efficiently conveyed the more complex ties Bidault had begun to establish between World War II and the anti-Nazi Resistance on the one hand and contemporary political realities in Algeria on the other. He immediately identified the French republican tradition with the principle political integrity, the oneness and indivisibility of the Republic. That formula summed up the notion that the French state alone possessed political authority and legitimacy—and implicitly rejected the idea that a faction like the FLN could redraw national boundaries—but it also nicely dovetailed with Bidault's earlier stated commitment to the territorial integrity of France. He then extended the comparison by implying the government's complicity in the threat to France's republican heritage: it did not (unlike Vichy, as is implied) even have the excuse of foreign occupation and oppression to justify what Bidault saw as unjustifiable actions. Against this passivity before and complicity in the problem, Bidault proposed an alternative response: one in which the nation, recognizing both the value and the fragility of its Republican heritage, mobilized itself to defend it. He thereby established a binary opposition between clusters of concepts and actions: political and moral depravity, dictatorial tendencies, and an understanding of history as the play of impersonal forces stood against moral rectitude, a fidelity to the nation, and a sense of history as a non-deterministic battlefield whose actors are conscious of their responsibility for their actions. And even if Bidault did not make it explicit here, he considered this fidelity and accountability—the choice of patriotism in a time of crisis—as essential to the spirit of the Resistance. This binary thus united a conception of the Resistance as tenacious patriotism with an idea of history as the play of morally responsible and accountable agents.

Bidault spent the following months dropping more and more hints that his mounting frustration and anger with de Gaulle would translate into illegal activity, but issued no more elaborate, resistancialist analyses for the time being. After several brief disappearances abroad through 1961, he finally left France definitively in February 1962, and he would not make his voice heard again until the announcement of the new CNR two months later.[112]

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[111] *Ibid.*, p. 4411. Emphasis mine.

[112] "Activité de M. George BIDAULT depuis la création du Comité de Vincennes," police summary, April 17, 1962, in the BDIC, Jacques Delarue OAS collection, F delta res 896, Folder 7.

Bidault's Re-Imagining of the Resistance: From the New CNR to Exile, 1962-1965

With Bidault's passage into clandestine life abroad and his foundation of a new CNR, the Resistance went from being a key historical reference to the main category through which he conceived of his political action. No longer simply an event of the past with relevance to current events, Bidault began to speak of the Resistance as a phenomenon that extended directly from the 1940s to the present, a state of mind and a commitment to certain principles that could be reactivated whenever France and its core values faced threats. Bidault unfolded this new vision of the Resistance through a series of documents—letters, articles, interviews, and CNR statements, and most fully in his political memoirs, *From One Resistance To the Other*, which he began to compose in 1962 and published in 1965. This vision drew on elements that Bidault had developed over the previous decade. But by framing his new clandestine activity in resistancialist terms, Bidault opened a space to significantly enrich his characterization of the Resistance as a living phenomenon with great relevance to the Algerian War.[113]

De-historicized Moralizing

One of the key elements of this evolution was the shift from a view of the Resistance as a historical landmark to one in which Resistance became a de-historicized "state of mind," the form taken by French patriotism when the nation fell under certain kinds of threats. "At the origin of the Resistance," Bidault said in the first chapter of his political memoirs, "there is a mental disposition, greater still a character trait. […] The Resistance is *nothing other* than intransigence and fidelity to the great causes for which one can live and, if necessary, die."[114] If the anti-Nazi Resistance had been the most famous manifestation of this patriotic state of mind, the "new Resistance" for *Algérie française* sprang no less from the same principles and

[113] Because I focus in this chapter on Bidault's individual vision of the Resistance, I draw primarily on texts directly attributable to him—articles and letters bearing his signature, interviews, and his political memoirs. However, I also make use of documents from the new CNR, some of which were not explicitly attributable to him and some of which were collective works produced by Bidault and other CNR members. Despite the difficulties in establishing authorship that this situation presents, it is often clear when Bidault had a heavy hand in the production of certain documents, or certain portions of documents. His distinctive rhetorical style and certain historical references essentially unique to him often "give him away." Certain topics and analytical moves also showed up again in *From One Resistance To the Other*, often in elaborated form. I have allowed myself on the basis of this evidence to use certain CNR documents in this chapter to illuminate Bidault's personal vision of the Resistance, but I will also reexamine these documents in Chapter 3 in analyzing the role that Bidault's Resistance vision played within the CNR and the extent to which it meshed or conflicted with other Council members' visions of the Resistance or the CNR.

[114] Bidault, *op. cit.*, p. 21. Emphasis mine.

commitments. Responding to critics who saw the CNR as a mere offshoot of the OAS, Bidault affirmed clearly, "To the contrary, it was I who founded the National Council of Resistance in the same spirit as 20 years ago."[115] That nearly two decades had passed since the retirement of the old Council, and that the political landscape had changed dramatically since World War II—these facts mattered little.

In de-historicizing the Resistance, Bidault leaned heavily on moral rather than political ideas to characterize his activity and his vision. Political analysis certainly figured in Bidault's writing, but stretching the idea of Resistance up to the early 1960s meant that he had to rely on more general, moralistic terms to disguise the differences between France in the 1940s and France during the Algerian War. Bidault's letter announcing the new CNR's existence laid out many of these core ideas. Faced with the imminent threat of the "illegal, unconstitutional, [and] illegitimate" "amputation" of Algeria from France, a new Resistance was necessary. De Gaulle, who had once fought patriotically for France, compounded this "betrayal" by "claiming all authority, without legal or temporal limit" to "silence" any dissent. And what he had "sworn not to do" was now done. This moral failing, which Bidault saw as a failure to keep a promise without explaining why, was just as important to the president of the new CNR as was the perceived illegality and unconstitutionality of decolonization. The two problems were, by this account, one and the same.

Tellingly, Bidault framed the situation in religious terms: "Ten righteous people were sufficient to save Sodom. And in our time, as in the time of the first Resistance, only a handful of resolute men are enough to save the motherland from dishonor and from tyranny."[116] The influence of Catholicism and Christian Democracy on Bidault's worldview is obvious here, both in the reference to the Old Testament story of Sodom and Gomorrah and his framing of the situation as a problem of moral decadence. He believed moral decay, in de Gaulle if not in huge segments of the nation, to be at the root of France's current political crisis. But even a small number of committed militants, if they clung tenaciously enough to the right moral-patriotic principles, could resolve the crisis and preserve the nation and the empire intact. This archetype of the righteous minority also served to justify Bidault's own minority cause. The resisters of the

[115] *Ibid.*, p. 277. I will take up the issue of the relationship between the CNR and the OAS in more detail in Chapter 3.

[116] Letter from Georges Bidault for distribution, April 9, 1962; in the BDIC, Jacques Delarue Collection, F delta res 888/3, Folder 2: 1962, documents divers

1940s had always remained few in number, yet they emerged on the winning side of the conflict. Bidault drew hope in his current cause from this, but by identifying the anti-Nazi Resistance's key to success in its moral righteousness rather than in political or material conditions, he prevented himself from articulating just how the CNR and *Algérie française* might carry the day. His analysis reduced him to repeating simply that justice would prevail; his confidence in his own rightness almost came across as faith in the prospect of divine deliverance.

Even so, a morally charged vocabulary continued to mark his analysis of the situation, and it figured heavily in *From One Resistance To the Other*. Speaking of the anti-Nazi Resistance of the 1940s, he wrote often of the importance of "duty" and "fidelity" to the nation and of the nobility of the Resistance: "It is one of the glories of France to have begotten so many heroic sons, fighting without conscription papers, without uniforms, without pay or the prospect of a pension, but not without the chance to die."[117] But for all the valor and righteousness he saw in it, Bidault did not deny the trying austerity of a life in the Resistance. He wrote of the caution he and his comrades in the anti-Nazi Resistance had to learn, the paranoia they dealt with and the long, discouraging periods where little seemed to change. He described his life at the time as "dangerous and monotonous," full of "mediocre adventures" and various inconveniences, such as the occasional necessity of sleeping in the streets to avoid detection.[118] These descriptions echoed a point he had made to young OAS and CNR militants in a January 1963 letter: "The clandestine life," he wrote, "is not a vocation; it is a constraint. We take refuge there when we have no other means to continue to serve the cause."[119] But the simplicity and austerity of this characterization of the Resistance only reinforced the idea that it sprang from national and moral duty alone. Bidault claimed that he and his comrades were not in it for glory or for fame; they resisted because, as good French men and women, they could do nothing else.

In another effect of his de-historicization of the Resistance, Bidault slid easily between descriptions of the Resistance of the 1940s and what he saw as the resistance for *Algérie française*. Rather than tracking the historical unfolding of the anti-Nazi Resistance, as well as that of the pro-*Algérie française* resistance, he took his moralistic conception of the resistancialist mindset as his starting point and treated both periods as two distinct but essentially

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[117] Bidault, *op. cit.*, p. 33.
[118] *Ibid.*, pp. 33, 51.
[119] Georges Bidault, "Le Président Bidault nous écrit," *Jeune Révolution*, No. 11, January 7, 1963, p. 5; in the BDIC, Jacques Delarue Collection, F delta res 888/3, Folder: 1962, documents divers.

similar manifestations of that mindset. Even while he organized his memoirs chronologically, treating World War II, the postwar years, and the Algerian War period consecutively, he filled the first of these three sections with references to the Algerian period. More often than not, when he took the time to relate an anecdote from the 1940s and describe past events from his perspective, he did so to serve his polemic. In re-imagining the Resistance, Bidault set out not to re-narrate it but to transform it into moral-political weapon, a set of broad claims and accusations he used to attack de Gaulle and defend *Algérie française*.

Resistance as Republicanism

Indeed, although he de-historicized the Resistance and framed it in moralistic terms, Bidault still advanced more concrete claims about what his new incarnation of the Resistance was and what it sought to accomplish. According to Bidault, the new Resistance was a patriotic defense of the territorial integrity and republican liberties of France against the gaullist betrayal and communist enemy that threatened them. In his memoirs, Bidault expounded at length on the ways in which the gaullist regime had both betrayed France's basic republican principles and violated the provisions of the constitution that grounded the Fifth Republic. Bidault did not find the Fifth Republic itself illegitimate. In fact, he said, as "Algeria is the origin and the *raison d'être* of the Fifth Republic, it is the cornerstone of the entire Republic."[120] But he spilled much ink outlining the ways in which de Gaulle had exceeded his authority under the constitution, an exercise that shows up often in CNR documents of 1962-63. Following the government ban on the CNR instituted in September 1962, the Council issued a statement affirming its legitimacy and largely foregoing the usual moralistic language for legal and political arguments about de Gaulle's failings. The CNR, according to the statement, was not the successor to the OAS, as many thought, but

> the secret National Assembly that, in the face of the high treason of the President of the Republic and of the members of his Government and due to the failure of the Constituent Authorities incapable of applying Article 68 of the Constitution have taken into their hands the defense of the higher interests of the Republic and the Nation.[121]

[120] Bidault, *op. cit.*, p. 228.
[121] Letter from the General Secretariat of the National Council of Resistance, September 4, 1962; in the BDIC, F delta rés 896, Folder 6. The term *Pouvoirs Constituants*—here translated as "Constituent Authorities"—refers to the political entity endowed with the authority to create or revise a country's constitution.

This document presented the CNR as invested with as much or more legitimacy than the government in power and described this "assembly" as composed of "men from all milieus, chosen independent of all ideological or partisan considerations, having proven their professional and moral value and their patriotism." Their legitimacy thus seemed to spring from this patriotism, although the document did gesture toward democratic sensibilities by mentioning that the CNR included some "parliamentarians who have never betrayed the mandate of the people." But it also limited its claim to power: "the CNR has no pretention of exercising the National Sovereignty, which belongs to the representatives of the people, elected by constitutional means." It sought not to overturn the constitution of the Fifth Republic but had simply "taken into its hands, in a provisional manner, the interests of the people and of the Republic, betrayed and threatened by those currently in power." More concretely, it sought to "lead the fight for the earliest possible liquidation of the illegitimate, traitorous, and dictatorial authority…and to replace it with a legitimate national authority, elected by the country according to normal constitutional means."[122]

While Bidault's precise role in the formulation of this document is unclear, its spirit is clearly consistent with the sorts of critiques he outlined later, especially in *From One Resistance To the Other*. The CNR was a legitimate enterprise because the gaullist regime had exceeded the bounds of its Republican and constitutional authority, and under such circumstances extraordinary means were both necessary and legitimate to preserve the "higher interests" of the Republic. Particularly important is the CNR document's reference to Article 68 of the constitution, which states that the President may only be deposed only in the event of "a failure in his duties manifestly incompatible with the exercise of his mandate," as judged by the "Parliament assembled as a High Court."[123] The characterization of the CNR as a "secret National Assembly" becomes clearer in light of this language; assuming this mantle allowed Bidault and his comrades to claim the authority granted by Article 68 to judge the President. While this argument rested on deficient premises—the CNR was not a representative assembly and thus clearly lacked the authority that it claimed to draw from this article—it nonetheless spoke to Bidault's belief that the CNR drew its legitimacy not only from the patriotic fervor of its adherents but also from legal and constitutional sources.

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[122] *Ibid.*
[123] The French Constitution of October 4, 1958, Title IX, Article 68.

This claim to legal legitimacy hints at precisely what Bidault meant by "republicanism," but it leaves open the question of which concrete principles he included under this label. He identified several of these principles, but the most important was easily that of the "oneness and indivisibility of the Republic." Bidault was not the author of the phrase; it was an old republican slogan that affirmed the centralized and unique political authority of the French state. The people would elect their representatives, but these representatives, who constituted the state, held the last word in terms of political authority and decision-making. The idea of Republican unity served two purposes for Bidault. Most important, he interpreted it in territorial terms, arguing that the constitutional requirement to protect the territorial integrity of France embodied this principle. While this step did not quite follow logically—the principle of sole political authority implies nothing specific about the territory over which a state exercises that authority—it lay at the heart of Bidault's vision of the Resistance. He repeated it endlessly in his memoirs, and the formula appeared often in CNR documents. A statement from June 1962, rejecting the idea that the French state and the FLN could reach an understanding, summed up the position well: "The only solution—there is no other—remains the defense and the full upholding of French sovereignty over the departments of the one and indivisible Republic."[124] This formulation also indicates Bidault's second use of this principle to delegitimize the FLN. Questions of territorial integrity aside, if the French state alone held political authority, the FLN could exercise legitimate control over Algeria if and only if the state allowed it—which for Bidault meant never, as he believed it outside the purview of state power to modify national boundaries.

But the principles of territorial integrity and centralized state authority were not simply the result of abstract philosophical reasoning for Bidault; he saw them as the animating spirit of the anti-Nazi Resistance and used this notion to establish the continuity he saw between that Resistance and his own. Certainly he drew on the Resistance's main goal of fighting the Occupation, which he compared to France's fight to crush all FLN influence within Algeria. But he also drew on more concrete historical examples. He concluded the first chapter of *From One Resistance To the Other* by lamenting how the "deputies and ministers" of the Consultative Assembly in Algiers—a governmental body established by a provisional predecessor to the Fourth Republic—had in large part "forgotten the city and the country where they deployed their

[124] "Message du 'Conseil National de la Résistance' aux populations des departements de l'Algérie et du Sahara, à l'armée et aux combattants de l'OAS et de toutes les forces de la Résistance," June 6, 1962; in the BDIC, Jacques Delarue Collection, F delta res 888/3, Folder 3: 1963.

talents."[125] When, in *From One Resistance To the Other*, he opened his discussion of the new CNR and posed the question of what the Resistance, of the 1940s and 1960s, was about, he answered himself with recourse to a text called *Speeches and Messages, 1940-1946*. The speeches and messages were those of Charles de Gaulle, and Bidault claimed that this collection was "built entirely around a single theme," that "from beginning to end the same words appeared, like a tireless swell, again and again: the Empire, the Empire, the Empire."[126] He went on to pull quote after quote from the text, selecting passages that appeared to support his own current political commitments: that France's empire was essential to it both for strategic reasons and for its grandeur; that the Muslims of French Africa were no less French or worthy of being French than the nation's and empire's other residents; that any loss of the Empire was inadmissible and void.[127] Bidault positioned these statements as key elements of the Resistance by virtue of their coming from Charles de Gaulle, whom Bidault identified as the leader of the resistancialist struggle against Nazi Occupation.

"Gaullo-Communist Collusion" and the Enemies of the Resistance

If it seems strange that here Bidault relied on de Gaulle, whom he now so bitterly opposed, to back up his position, it only highlighted the central but contradictory position the general enjoyed in Bidault's refashioning of the Resistance. When Bidault thought of the two most important periods of his life, de Gaulle always sat at the heart of events, but in two very different ways. Bidault thought of the de Gaulle of the 1940s as the inspiration behind and leader of the Resistance, while de Gaulle of the Algerian War was the worst kind of traitor to the nation and the Republic. Bidault was not alone in the intense confusion and betrayal he felt in the face of this seeming contradiction—many of the *Algérie française* camp had hung their hopes on de Gaulle in May 1958 to champion their cause—but rather than analyze the situation in political terms, he could only understand it as the product of a deep moral failing in the general.[128] It was rare that the CNR released statements or Bidault gave interviews in which de Gaulle was not singled out as a liar, a traitor, or a megalomaniac whose single-minded pursuit of

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[125] Bidault, *op. cit.*, p. 56.
[126] *Ibid.,* p. 278. The body that established the Consultative Assembly was the French Committee of National Liberation (*Comité français de Libération national*, or CFLN), which in 1943 united de Gaulle's London-based *Comité national français* and Giraudist forces in North Africa. The GPRF replaced the CFLN one year later.
[127] *Ibid.*, pp. 279-281.
[128] For one among many other examples of anti-independence militants expressing profound disappointment in de Gaulle, see Jacques Soustelle, *L'Espérance trahie* [The Betrayed Hope], Paris: L'Alma 1962.

absolute power in France generated and represented the decadence of the French nation. In a July 1962 interview with the *New York Times*, for instance, Bidault characterized de Gaulle's government as a "minority" colluding with communists that had "destroyed parliamentary democracy" and "endangered the future of Europe."[129] He also devoted pages and pages of his memoirs to modeling de Gaulle's psychology, to identifying the seeds of imperious or autocratic behavior that had remained harmless enough in the patriot of the 1940s but blossomed into the dictator of the Fifth Republic.

But Bidault's obsession with the morality of de Gaulle's evolution did not mean that his analysis of the general's relationship to the Resistance lacked depth or sophistication. He did his best to defend the notion that "the [anti-Nazi] Resistance was gaullist" even in the face of his anger and confusion. De Gaulle's "Call of June 18," the radio address in which de Gaulle expressed his hope for a resurgent France and Allied military victory in the war, held great personal and historical significance for Bidault. "It was," wrote Bidault, "at the time of my captivity that I felt the greatest attraction toward this distant, unknown figure…this Charles de Gaulle who called for the Resistance":

> The solitude of General de Gaulle in London…did not bother me. One man spoke of victory, of a France no longer enslaved, of an intact Empire that had a role to play in the favorable outcome of the conflict. That was enough. Without knowing almost anything else about him, I was on his side. I did not hear the Call of June 18. I understood late, and not without gaps, what he wanted. The more serious the situation, the harder the trial: the simpler the solution. It is De Gaulle who told me that, and it is true, as true as diamond. That was and remains my yoke: it was the revolt against defeat that made me gaullist, and it is still the revolt against defeat and shame that made me anti-gaullist. I was not half one, and I am not half the other.[130]

As we have seen, this address did not actually call for a mass uprising or a popular resistance movement. But Bidault identified the "Call of June 18" as his personal reason for entering the Resistance and the root of the historical phenomenon writ large—all because de Gaulle opposed the Occupation and sought to restore the independence of the French nation and the authority of the French state. He also used this call to ground his current political activity. "After all," he wrote, "what was June 18? It was an act of insubordination coming from a newly promoted young officer who set himself up as the judge of a state that was, to all appearances,

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[129] Sydney Gruson, "Bidault, Hiding From French, Says de Gaulle Rule Is Doomed," *The New York Times*, July 9, 1962, p. 1.
[130] Bidault, *op. cit.*, pp. 29-30.

legally constituted, and said, 'No.'"[131] The parallels Bidault sought to draw were clear: if the gaullist regime maintained the forms of legal and constitutional legitimacy, it had long ago made them meaningless through fascistic excess. Under these circumstances, the state no longer protected the nation and promoted its values. The Resistance rose up in the 1940s for these very tasks, and Bidault believed his own activity animated by the same spirit.

On Bidault's view (and that of many of his *Algérie française* comrades), when de Gaulle betrayed the core principles of France and the Resistance, he took on a role not dissimilar to that of another figure from World War II—Philippe Pétain, the head of state appointed by the Assembly in 1940 and the founder of the Vichy regime. Bidault compared De Gaulle's accession to Algerian independence to Pétain's capitulations to Germany: "1962 was for France an interior 1940."[132] Beyond this similarity between "founding crimes," Bidault saw both regimes as dictatorial and fascistic:

> Certain people would like to define the Resistance as antifascism. Where is domestic fascism today if not precisely among those who, gathered around General de Gaulle, self-proclaimed "Guide of the centers," of journalistic sanctions, of seduction, intimidation, obsession, and money.[133]

This accusation devolved at the end into vague insults, but the reference to internment centers and press censorship were poignant—they recalled techniques used by Vichy to prevent and punish dissent, comparing them to techniques the gaullist regime used largely to dismantle militant *Algérie française* organizations like the OAS. The illiberal excesses and national betrayal Bidault saw in de Gaulle and his government seemed to go hand in hand.

For all the ire he directed at the "Man of June 18," though, Bidault did not see de Gaulle as the ultimate threat facing France. De Gaulle might have been peerless in the shamefulness of his "betrayal," but the true danger of his actions lay in the greater danger to which they exposed France: international Communism.[134] Bidault wrote unequivocally in his memoirs about what he

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[131] *Ibid.*, p. 247.
[132] *Ibid.*, p. 27.
[133] *Ibid.*, pp. 23-24.
[134] It is worth clarifying the precise relationship Bidault saw between de Gaulle and Communism, which he expounded on near the end of his memoirs: "General de Gaulle has left the [political] right to draw up grand plans in which it is obvious that the communist has a place and holds a stake. Must we admit, then, that General de Gaulle has become a communist? But that is not a precise formulation. There is in reality a constant in his colorful life, among so many contradictory declarations. This constant is the man himself in the variety of his roles and his policies. General de Gaulle was never really of the *Action Française*. And whatever he does to merit the reputation, General de Gaulle is not communist, even when he carries water to the windmill of communism. General de Gaulle is gaullist. He is the only man who always has been" (*Ibid.*, pp. 35-336).

saw as the stakes of the current political situation. A "vast upheaval" simultaneously threatened "France and Christian civilization, " but it "lay not in a residual fascism nowhere to be found but in communism." He saw France as "the last bastion of Europe" and of this Christian civilization, "a limited promontory but with vast means and immense possibilities and endowed with a long, glorious history."[135] Importantly, the phrase I translate as "Christian civilization"—*la civilization d'âme chrétienne*—translates more literally as "civilization of a Christian soul." Bidault was not a theocrat—he did not insist that only Christians could truly be French or that the Church should have political authority—but as a Christian Democrat he did believe that the greatness of the French nation and European civilization more generally sprang from societies nurtured by Christian values. Communism, with its atheist and materialist analysis of society, stood opposed to everything Bidault valued in France and in "Christian civilization." In a television interview he gave in mid-1962, he declared his "intention to pursue the fight for the unity of the nation and to prevent anarchy, even if the rest of the world is not taking notice of the bolshevization of the Mediterranean basin."[136] He conceived of the FLN in power as a "Marxist Muslim state" and claimed that the "only difference" between Algeria and Cuba was that Algeria was "less close to Florida."[137] The FLN did, over time, embrace socialist language and ideas, and it did receive weapons and support from communist powers like Yugoslavia and the USSR, but Bidault saw in this situation a well-coordinated game of world domination by world Communism.[138] Algeria was the Soviet Union's leg up to Western Europe, of which France was the last bastion. The stakes of the new Resistance were those of the struggle between Christian civilization and the communist threat.

The decision to frame the Resistance as essentially about anti-communism, however, ran up against two serious limitations, the most important of which was the participation of French communists in the anti-Nazi Resistance. Bidault would have it that during the Algerian War "the same enemy [as in the 1940s] threaten[ed]" the "fundamental freedoms" of France, that Communism had always been the greatest threat to France. But whatever existential threat Bidault perceived in the PCF or the USSR, they simply were not the target of the anti-Nazi Resistance. Indeed, the Soviets played a key role in the Allied military victory over Germany,

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[135] *Ibid.*, p. 21.
[136] Television interview with CBS, June 23, 1962, quoted in Dalloz, *op. cit.*, p. 420.
[137] Bidault, *op. cit.*, pp. 224, 256.
[138] Thénault, *op. cit.*, p. 177.

and French communists, despite their distance from and difficulties interacting with other Resistance groups, were among the first to rise up against Vichy and the Occupation. Communists even formed a key group within the World War II CNR. Bidault recognized these contradictions and attempted to paper them over as best he could in his memoirs. At times he took a defensive stance, saying that "yes," he had "gotten along with communists during the war" while qualifying that "this was not an easy task, and it posed a number of thorny problems."[139] At other times he even argued that the nationalist instincts of French communists sometimes overcame their political training. For instance, he recognized their contribution to the battle for the liberation of Paris, adding, "Doubtless, one is no less a man for being communist, and at that time the national reflex carried the day…. They were, like the others, carried along by a wave whose unfolding they could not oppose."[140] But the awkwardness of these attempts is apparent; Bidault could not square these evaluations of French communists with the anti-communism he claimed was part of the spirit of the Resistance from the start. Moreover, he offered these qualifications too late: he made no such attempt to resolve these "communist contradictions" during the brief flowering of the new CNR 1962-63, and by the time he did so in his memoirs, the cause of *Algérie française* was long dead.

The other serious problem encountered by Bidault's anti-communist notion of the Resistance was the centrality he gave "Christian civilization." If Algeria was truly an integral part of France and thus of Christian civilization, how did Bidault reconcile this fact with the Muslim majority of the Algerian population and the territory's hundreds of years of shaping by "Islamic civilization" (to extend Bidault's language)? Again, he had no good solution to this contradiction, and he responded to it much as he did to the first—belatedly, in his memoirs, and rather ineffectually. He painted Islam as "a religion that demands little and, truthfully, more a party than a religion."[141] Alongside his claim that there was "no Algerian nation, or in any case not any more," he denied Algerians any possibility of legitimate political or religious existence outside of France. He coupled these accusations with a story from his time of imprisonment in Germany, when he attended a Mass that fifty or so Algerians joined as well. He was "struck, and surprised, by their presence," and when he asked them later why they came, they "said simply:

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[139] Bidault, *op. cit.*, p. 22.
[140] *Ibid.*, p. 61.
[141] *Ibid.*, p. 259.

'We are French like you.'"[142] The messages of this story—that Christianity lay at the heart of Frenchness, that this could be clear to Algerians and that neither colonialism nor the presence of Islam in North Africa interfered with this—were as clear as its awkwardness and implausibility. While for Bidault, the decline of the Catholic Church in Algeria paralleled the anarchy and deterioration he believed to have succeeded the French Empire, it is clear that he did not know how to reconcile the notion of Christian civilization as central to the French nation with the idea of Algeria as part of France.

The OAS and the Question of Action

In its September 4, 1962, response to the government ban on the CNR, the Council referred to itself as the "spokesperson of the Resistance," not as the sole agent of resistance.[143] Bidault often employed similar phrasing, referring to the Resistance as a plural phenomenon, a coalition of forces united under the common cause of *Algérie française*. Even with the close of the war, the CNR was not the only group sustaining the fight for a French Algeria, but talk of the "forces of resistance" referred largely to the enduring presence of the OAS in particular. Although the French state had significantly weakened the OAS by early 1962, it remained the most significant bastion of anti-independence militancy when the CNR came on the scene, and Bidault had to make a place for the OAS in his new vision of the Resistance. As a competitor to the OAS for predominance among *Algérie française* organizations, Bidault had to make sure that expressions of solidarity did not also imply the OAS's superiority to the CNR. As a result, Bidault always presented the Secret Army ambiguously, as a noble but ultimately failed attempt to keep Algeria French.

After the fact, Bidault had mostly laudatory remarks for certain individuals from the OAS leadership. In *From One Resistance To the Other*, he singled out a few in particular to commend them for their honorable defense of *Algérie française*. Bidault wrote, for instance, of his hope that General Paul Gardy—the second head of the OAS after Raoul Salan's arrest in April 1962—would be "compensated" one day for the "immense and painful burden he bore for his country."[144] But Bidault wrote a more extended, almost elegiac passage on Salan, imbuing him with all the glory and severity of Bidault's ideal resister. Salan had been tried and found guilty

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[142] *Ibid.*
[143] Letter from the General Secretariat of the National Council of Resistance, September 4, 1962, in the BDIC, Jacques Delarue Collection, F delta res 896, Folder 6
[144] Bidault, *op. cit.*, p. 251.

of treason by the time Bidault wrote his memoirs, and Bidault takes this judgment as an opportunity to expound on questions of fidelity to one's nation and obedience to political authority. Salan may have been judged a rebel, but the "question is to know," wrote Bidault, "from the point of view of the most important facts and of the most serious demands of the law and of the authority of the state whether one is a greater rebel in refusing to obey orders contrary to the law or in executing them." This problem was posed "after the Liberation," he said, and if military officers and national leaders "do not have the right" to refuse orders as an act of conscience, "the Nuremberg trials were a sham and the guilty of Oradour were perfectly guiltless." By these references to the era of World War II and one of the central principles of the anti-Nazi Resistance—the right to patriotic and conscientious disobedience of the law—Bidault positioned Salan in the lineage of those who defended their nation even when the state and the legal order had turned against it. As in his earlier discussion of the anti-Nazi Resistance, he did not present Salan's actions as purely glorious, without pain or struggle: this was a man, a "decorated general of the army…who voluntarily abandoned the roses of his garden, conveniences and vulgar honors…and, at more than sixty years old, chose the rocky road of the bled and made the most of the resting places that chance offered him."[145] The austerity and self-sacrifice of this route attested, in Bidault's mind, to the moral value and credibility of Salan's actions.

The image contrasts with Bidault's reiterated depiction of gaullist greed and decadence, and Bidault indeed drew an explicit comparison between Salan and de Gaulle. "From the point of view of difficulties, of danger, and of discomfort, [Salan's path] was easily more difficult than June 18."[146] He also extended the comparison through his discussion of legitimate insubordination and disobedience. Following his Nuremberg remark, he asked, "After all, what was June 18? It was an act of insubordination by a newly promoted young officer who set himself up as the judge of a state that was, to all appearances, legally constituted, and said, 'No.'"[147] We have already seen this passage and discussed what it expressed about Bidault's idea of what was "gaullist" in the anti-Nazi Resistance, but it also played an important role in Bidault's presentation of Salan. On this telling, Salan was an affirmation of the de Gaulle of

[145] *Ibid.*, pp. 247-248. The "guilty of Oradour" refers to German soldiers who massacred inhabitants of the French city Oradour-sur-Glane as the *Wehrmacht* retreated in 1944.
[146] *Ibid.*, p. 248.
[147] *Ibid.*, p. 247.

1940 and a rejection of the de Gaulle of the Fifth Republic. He followed his conscience and remained faithful to his nation, and he was thereby great, even if he "did not have the means to efficiently command the insurrection."[148]

This dig that Bidault snuck into his otherwise laudatory portrait of Salan hints at the somewhat different posture Bidault maintained toward the OAS during the time of the second CNR. While recognizing its importance as a major player and an ally in the fight for *Algérie française*, Bidault spoke of the OAS with reservation. He saw it as a failed approach in the fight for French Algeria and, by framing his own organization as a federative force like the first Resistance Council, sought to displace the Secret Army as the hegemonic entity within the anti-independence resistance. This position often expressed itself in Bidault's repeated (and largely true) assertion that the CNR was not a mere successor to the OAS, as was often claimed by its opponents. Bidault "scoffed," according to a *New York Times* reporter in July 1962, "at French officials' assertions that he had been designated leader by Raoul Salan….":

> "The council means exactly the same as it did twenty years ago," Bidault said. "I am not the owner of the title [of leader]. No one is. I did not ask permission the first time. I did not ask permission this second time. I not only accept it; I and I alone decided it.
>
> […]
>
> Then, it was a war against the Germans, that is, against the enemy and the collaborators with the enemy. Now once again there are collaborators, and everything starts over again."[149]

While these comments were clearly an attempt to legitimate the new CNR, they also had the strange effect of reducing the legitimacy of the OAS by situating it as an actor outside the historical lineage of the anti-Nazi Resistance, or at least one without the full historical legitimacy Bidault attributed to his new CNR. The power struggle between the CNR and the OAS thus constrained Bidault's attempt to present the forces of *Algérie française* as a unified renewal of the Resistance.

It was also with reference to the OAS that Bidault most directly addressed the question of "action"—of the strategy the new Resistance would adopt in its fight against de Gaulle and Algerian independence—and in particular the role that violence would play in this strategy. After a period of equivocation, Bidault chose to frame the question of action in the Resistance in explicitly political terms: while violence might sometimes serve as a necessary political

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[148] *Ibid.*, p. 248.
[149] Sydney Gruson, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

instrument, it was a necessary evil and not the centerpiece of the action of the Resistance. Bidault was forced to make this distinction largely because, by early 1962, the French public had come to identify the OAS with its primary political instrument: rather indiscriminate terrorist violence. With the emergence of the CNR in April of that year, Bidault could choose either to continue this approach or to define a new strategy, and initially he strayed little from the idea that violence would play a key role in the advancement of his political goals. Bidault and his comrades in the CNR did not carry out OAS-style terrorist attacks at all (though even the Secret Army's capacity to do so was at this moment greatly diminished). He instead entertained the idea of an assassination attempt against de Gaulle, at this point a common idea among *Algérie française* militants and consistent with the idea of the person of de Gaulle as responsible for the "amputation" of Algeria from France. But Bidault never developed these plans in any detail, let alone executed them, and he chose to abandon them altogether after the failed attempt at de Gaulle's life at Le Petit Clamart in August 1962, led by mid-ranking OAS militant Jean-Marie Bastien-Thiry. This attack turned majority public opinion in France even more strongly against the remnants the *Algérie française* movement and led Bidault to decree a permanent end to all plans to assassinate de Gaulle. In subsequent interviews, he confirmed that he had "ordered a halt to bombings in France"—a formulation that nicely avoided responsibility for past attacks while claiming the authority to stop future ones—but left the door open to the possibility of future violence. He equivocated in response to the question of whether his "objectives could be attained without violence" and said he could not "prevent the work of Government provocateurs."[150]

These qualified statements formed part of a larger strategy by Bidault to distance the second CNR—and his conception of the Resistance—from the OAS. The September 4, 1962, CNR letter affirmed that "the CNR is not a reconstitution of the OAS. It differs from it as much by its mission, its nature, and its legal foundations as by its methods and its spirit." This remark about "methods and spirit" spoke to the extent to which the OAS had become associated with indiscriminate violence. The same document described the CNR as composed of "important military and political figures…representatives of various resistance movements, of professional and organizations and labor unions," and several other groups.[151] The document mentioned

[150] Olivier Dard, *Voyage au cœur de l'OAS*, Perrin: Paris 2005, pp. 321-326; Sydney Gruson, *op. cit.*, p. 4.
[151] Letter from the General Secretariat of the National Council of Resistance, September 4, 1962, *op. cit.*

military figures, but its authors also went to great length to describe the CNR as a predominantly civic and political organization and not one dominated by officers (as was the perception of the OAS). On this view, the Resistance and the CNR in particular were by their nature political, and their goal was simply to reestablish the rightful political order of France.

Bidault himself hammered away at this message. In addition to reiterating the distance of the CNR from the OAS and downplaying the importance of violence to CNR strategy, he told interviewers "political strategy is basic"—implying that it took precedence over military strategy.[152] He even hinted at one point to a *New York Times* reporter that he would like to once again "become part of the legal opposition" as he sought the "re-establishment of the fulness [*sic*] of our rights"—meaning the rights of *Algérie française* partisans.[153] A "Note on Violence" appended to *From One Resistance To the Other* also shed light on Bidault's thoughts on this matter. He wrote, of the anti-Nazi Resistance, that "we never claimed…that there were not errors and faults in the Resistance. […] The Resistance was an admirable instinct, prodigious courage and an important contribution to victory. But that there were abuses, that cannot honorably be denied." Bidault followed this claim with a surprisingly candid account of "abuses committed by the hard core that fought against Algerian independence to the end:

> I do not know how many victims worthy of the same regret when they were innocent (because they were not spared murder or denunciation) could be counted among the losses attributable to the final push [*sursaut*] for French Algeria. But I know that it was the same fight.[154]

He follows this passage immediately by an absolute rejection of torture, which he attributes exclusively to the government. While this appendix clearly functioned as an attempt to save face in the context of the undeniable violence committed by the final partisans of *Algérie française*, it also points alongside Bidault's earlier comments to his political vision of the new Resistance. Especially after backing off attempts to assassinate de Gaulle, he clearly articulated a vision in which violence was a subordinate and relatively minor instrument in the larger fight for the political soul of France. It was not the military, whose primary business was violence, but civic and political forces above all who could successfully carry the day in this fight.

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[152] Unedited footage of an interview with Georges Bidault on the BBC program *Panorama*, March 5, 1963, in the Archives of the Institut national audiovisuelle (INA), AFE04004539 / 635079.
[153] Sydney Gruson, "Bidault Cancels De Gaulle Plot," *The New York Times*, October 22, 1962, p. 7.
[154] Bidault, *op. cit.*, pp. 348-349.

Unfortunately for Bidault, circumstances left him unable to define this "political strategy" as much more than counterpropaganda. When asked during his BBC interview how he "expect[ed] to get [his] own supporters mobilized in France," he replied: "By such means as are left to us by a dictatorial regime. That is to say, underground publications such as those I produced more than twenty years ago on behalf of Free France."[155] Nowhere else did Bidault so clearly articulate what the weapons of his fight would be, and the history of the CNR bears out this claim. Its most enduring legacy was its ability to sustain of the voice of *Algérie française* for nearly a year after independence; it had little impact on the material realities of Algerian independence and political life in France. Bidault was never able to articulate, let alone set in motion, a strategy more elaborate than publications that countered the official narrative on the war and independence and attempted to influence majority opinion in France.

Conclusion

Over the course of 1962-1963, George Bidault elaborated a new vision of the Resistance, arguing that the fight for *Algérie française* was rooted in the same principles of republicanism and a defense of the territorial integrity of the nation that had inspired the anti-Nazi Resistance. The sophistication of this vision and the extent to which he grounded it in political principles he had held for some time demonstrate that his efforts were not simply an attempt to brush up the image of the anti-independence movement. Rather, Bidault presented a detailed, largely coherent account of the connection between these two periods of his political activity. It was not without its share of limitations and contradictions, but it constituted serious political analysis by a man who felt that the gaullist regime had stifled his movement's chances for success and that victory might only come in the form of a new resistancialist fight. But what Bidault new vision did not do was produce a political *program* for *Algérie française*. He articulated a vision that could unite his movement in opposition to Algerian independence, but that vision could not resolve deep political divisions within the movement or recruit new militants from outside the movement. The following chapter will take up these issues, outlining the qualified success Bidault's vision enjoyed within *Algérie française* but its eventual inability to save the movement from its inevitable demise.

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[155] *Panorama*, March 5, 1963, *op. cit.*

III

"Our duty is to re-conquer our people"

The Rise and Fall of Bidault's Resistancialist Vision, 1962-1965

In early January 1963, Bidault published a message in the newsletter of *Jeune Révolution* (Young Revolution), a pro-*Algérie française* group of young militants allied to the OAS. He wrote to these partisans to instruct them on strategy, to explain the advantages and constraints of the clandestine life, and to defend the approach that the CNR had taken to date. The tone of this letter contrasted strikingly with that of most of the interviews he had given and the statements he had released. While the latter lauded the nobility of the spirit of the Resistance and emphasized the movement's chances for success, demonstrating an almost religious faith in the cause of *Algérie française*, this letter revealed a much greater sense of pragmatism on Bidault's part, as well as a recognition of the obstacles he faced and what he would need to overcome them. Nowhere is this clearer than when Bidault urged his audience to push their strategy beyond "inspiration, exasperation, and the calming of nerves":

> We must make the notion of success a part of the way we think. *We are not a Church*—although even the salt of the earth has a tendency to return to the salty marsh—a Church with the promise of eternity. We are a Nation on the verge of perishing; I have seen it twice. We are a Nation, or in any case what remains of one, and our duty is to re-conquer our people. This is a heroic task for which heroism alone is insufficient. Calculation, taking advantage of our enemy's weaknesses, a proper understanding of the means at our disposal, and opportunities likely [to emerge along the way]—all these are necessary as well.[156]

This letter is a useful reminder that behind the forceful and often repetitious rhetoric with which Bidault advertised the CNR lay a mind with a keen appreciation of the strategic situation in which *Algérie française* found itself. To all appearances, the fervor of Bidault's CNR propaganda reflected the passion he truly felt for his cause, but he also realized that passion alone could not stem the flow of the events he wished to turn back.

This letter also serves as a reminder that the vision Bidault crafted of the Resistance from 1962 to 1965 did not automatically become dominant within *Algérie française*. While Bidault remained one of the most prominent figures fighting against de Gaulle and Algerian

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[156] Georges Bidault, "Le Président Bidault nous écrit," *Jeune Révolution*, No. 11, January 7, 1963, pp. 5-6 in the BDIC, Jacques Delarue Collection, F delta res 888/3, Folder: 1962, documents divers. Emphasis added.

independence from 1958 onward, it did not go without saying that his personal vision of the Resistance would prevail among his comrades as a way of conceptualizing their fight. Whether his ideas would take root was an open question, as was the range of their effectiveness: would the new CNR univocally adopt his vision of the Resistance? What of the OAS and the rest of *Algérie française*? And would these ideas find any purchase within French and international public opinion? The extent of Bidault's success was different at each of these three levels. Within the CNR, at least during the time of Bidault's presidency, his vision of the Resistance always enjoyed a prominent place. Despite philosophical differences and some degree of factionalism that divided the Council, the group was largely a creature of Bidault's making, which is clear in part because of the extent to which CNR rhetoric aligned Bidault's personal writings and interviews. Determining just how Bidault imposed his vision on the organization remains difficult—the paucity of internal documents obscures our understanding of the day-to-day operations of CNR and the role that individuals played in its operation—but the correlation between the CNR's characterization of the Resistance and Bidault's own is unmistakable.

Bidault enjoyed nearly as much success in promoting his vision of the Resistance within the *Algérie française* movement more generally, although, unsurprisingly, some of the actors within this highly diverse and fractured coalition refused to accept his ideas and his organization. This receptivity to Bidault's vision sprang largely from the OAS's own promotion of the language and ideas of the Resistance—in the name given to the organization, as we have seen, but also in Salan's attempt to establish his own CNR under the auspices of the OAS in March 1962, just one month before Bidault announced the existence of his own. These conflicting attempts resulted in a short-term "battle of the Resistance Councils" as Bidault's CNR and the OAS each sought to present itself as the true representative body of the pro-*Algérie française* resistance. This episode was just one in a larger struggle between the Bidault's CNR and the OAS for control over the larger anti-independence movement, but it also revealed the extent to which the Resistance became an accepted lens for understanding the *Algérie française* fight. The struggle for dominance of this movement played out in part over the struggle to determine who could claim the mantle of the Resistance and define its meaning for contemporary events. And in this fight, Bidault largely succeeded: the Resistance Council of the OAS quickly became an irrelevant institution, and by November 1962, the remaining official leadership of the OAS found itself announcing an integration into the structures of the CNR. Though, as we will see, the move inspired resistance and defection by a handful of marginal *Algérie française* groups, this

placing of the OAS under the CNR mantle signified the high point of Bidault's vision of the Resistance for *Algérie française*. Most of those fighting against Algerian independence at least outwardly acknowledged the idea of the Resistance expressed by Bidault and the CNR as the official anti-independence line.

Bidault could not, however, extend this success to the realm of public opinion. Not even a high degree of support within *Algérie française* could translate into mass acceptance of Bidault's conceptualization of the Resistance, least of all the idea that his contemporary political activity fell within the tradition of the anti-Nazi Resistance. Though the scarcity of sources makes it difficult to establish precisely the organization and size of Bidault's CNR, the Council clearly was never a mass organization. It failed to find widespread support within the French population and relied heavily on the energetic but overextended members of its small Executive Committee. Few journalists outside the French and European far-right press attributed any credibility, resistancialist or otherwise, to Bidault and his comrades. Much more commonly they wrote him off as just another terrorist conspirator indistinguishable from the leaders and militants of the OAS, and international journalists ranged from indifference to an echoing of this position. On every front, Bidault never succeeded in finding anything close to a warm reception of his ideas, and this hostility reflected and contributed to the political marginality that all but doomed Bidault's fight from its inception. Unlike the years of Nazi Occupation, when much of the French population felt at least some opposition to Vichy and the Occupation, a war-weary Metropolitan population had come to accept an Algerian independence that de Gaulle made inevitable and irreversible. The only group that continued to feel otherwise in any large numbers, that is, the *pieds-noirs*, had no state willing to defend their interests once de Gaulle and the FLN began to work out the details of a cease-fire and independence. Bidault and the CNR were no more able than the OAS to offer anything close to the political and military muscle necessary to avoid independence, let alone reverse it.

Under these circumstances, it is unsurprising that when Bidault was forced into exile in Brazil, the CNR dropped the Resistance as its primary historical reference. By this point the French government had successfully split up the CNR leadership, arresting Antoine Argoud in March 1962 and forcing Bidault and Soustelle to remain outside France. Pierre Sergent, a young captain and one of the secondary figures of the CNR, assumed leadership of the organization and refashioned it as a "National Council of Revolution" devoted to anti-communist revolution across Europe. These moves were an attempt to transform and sustain a cause that had become

more weakened and marginalized than ever, but they also constituted a rejection of the Resistance as a filter for understanding and organizing the fight for *Algérie française*.

The New CNR: A Creature of Bidault's Making

Though Bidault was the creator, president, and spokesperson of the new CNR, it was never a given that he would determine every aspect of the organization's functioning or its message. The Council brought together a number of individuals of various political outlooks. Divisions and disagreement were inevitable, and in order to make the CNR a functioning and effective organization, Bidault had to build the Council a unified vision and message—a coherent official line, ready for public consumption. He would have to prevent dissent and alternative visions from challenging his own without alienating his allies within the organization. The lack of surviving internal documents makes it somewhat difficult to assess the power dynamic within the CNR and to determine the roles each of its members played in debating strategy and producing documents, but the style and content of existing documents indicate that Bidault's vision of the Resistance was dominant within the CNR.[157] Bidault did not control the production of every document, and the Council's texts reveal other opinions in the organization, with emphases and visions that differed from Bidault's. But the CNR president left his stamp on his organization's main documents and many secondary ones, setting the tone of its anti-independence fight and establishing the dominance of his resistancialist framing of that fight.

While each of the CNR's main propaganda and theoretical texts resulted from a collaborative effort, a close reading of these texts reveals several political currents—that is, clear tendencies within the texts distinguishable by their rhetorical style and the messages they tended to push. It is not always feasible to assign each text a current (or currents) or to assign each current to a CNR member, but when comparison with other texts or known authorship is

[157] The size and organizational structure of the CNR are also difficult to pinpoint with precision. In July 1962, Bidault told the *New York Times* that the "number of supporters of his organization in France was growing steadily," though it is impossible to verify the truth of this statement, which was almost certainly an exaggeration. (Sydney Gruson, "Bidault, Hiding From French, Says de Gaulle Rule Is Doomed," *The New York Times*, July 8, 1962, p.4.) The most transparent portion of the CNR was its "Executive Committee," comprised of Bidault, Jacques Soustelle, and Antoine Argoud. Later, after the announcement of a CNR-OAS merger in November, General Paul Gardy joined the Executive Committee. The May 1962 meeting in Rome that saw the birth of the Executive Committee also brought together Claude Dumont (a *pieds-noir* senator), Jean Brune, André Rossfelder (an activist close to Soustelle), Guy Ribeaud (Bidault's personal secretary, who followed him into exile in Brazil), and Pierre Sergent (a captain who assumed leadership of the CNR after Bidault's exile). (Olivier Dard, *Voyage au coeur de l'OAS*, Paris: Perrin 2005, p. 320.) Bidault also maintained connections within the *Algérie française* movement more broadly, including with members of OAS networks, but it is unclear to what extent this augmented the CNR's operational capacity.

possible, I have made hypotheses about which members were most influential in producing certain portions of text. More rarely, some CNR texts listed the names of their authors, which simplifies the task of determining the individual contributions of CNR members.

The easiest current to pick out and by far the most prominent is that of Bidault. His personal style—grandiose and long-winded, but often clever and penetrating—is unmistakable, and many of the rhetorical and substantive touchstones of CNR documents correspond to those that appeared in Bidault's personal writings and interviews. In addition to these latter texts, which we have already examined in Chapter 2, Bidault often published prominent pieces in *Appel de la France*, an OAS newsletter that the CNR took over in the summer of 1962. Bidault used these articles in a number of ways—most often to comment on recent developments in postwar Franco-Algerian relations, but sometimes to lay out broader principles of the CNR to expound on the spirit of the Resistance. He accomplished this last goal most often by contrasting the rugged conditions of the new Resistance to de Gaulle's comfortable position in France, which he likened to de Gaulle's relative safety and security in London during World War II. "There is no convenient resistance," he said, "with the exception of a comfortable stay in London or Algiers, at the time when I and many others had the pleasure of staying one step ahead of the Gestapo and the Milice [a paramilitary force under Vichy]."[158] But for the most part, Bidault did not see these pages as the place to elaborate on his new and expanded vision of the Resistance, using them mostly for propaganda carefully timed to respond to current events. Despite a few general gestures at the Resistance, his primary references were mostly events and slogans that pertained directly to the Algerian War.

Even in documents that did not bear his signature, however, Bidault's influence was clear. In the previous chapter, we have already seen how much the CNR's September 4, 1962, letter responding to the state ban of the Council drew on Bidault's arguments and vision. He was also highly influential in drafting the CNR's Manifesto, published in November 1962 following the announcement of a CNR-OAS merger. The Manifesto bore the names of Bidault, Soustelle, and Argoud, as well as the recently recruited OAS leader General Paul Gardy, but it clearly suggested a dominant role for Bidault in the authorship of the document—the first page of the booklet features Bidault's signature centered on a page that otherwise bears only the date and the name of the CNR. His influence is also evident in the text itself. Its vituperative attacks on the

[158] Interview with Georges Bidault, *Appel de la France*, No. 8, November 1962, p. 4, in the Bibliothèque de Documentation Internationale Contemporaine (BDIC), The Jacques Delarue Collection, F delta res 896, Folder 8.

"lying" and "hypocrisy" of a criminal and dictatorial regime, its assertion that a government that had violated the constitution had facilitated the "balkanization" and "communization" of former French Africa—these attacks on de Gaulle and his government prefigured in style and substance huge swaths of *From One Resistance To the Other*.[159] His favorite formulation of the geopolitical stakes of the fight against Communism also made an appearance in the Manifesto:

> Without integration in what we now call francophone Africa, this integration that has not taken place between the North and the South is happening right now between the East and the West. If we do not undertake the integration of Europe, it will happen nonetheless. INSTEAD OF EUROPE FROM THE ATLANTIC TO THE URALS, WE WOULD SEE EUROPE FROM THE URALS TO THE ATLANTIC.[160]

Bidault frequently associated a vision of Europe "from the Atlantic to the Urals"—a Russian mountain range and by some common definitions the eastern border of continental Europe]—with de Gaulle and criticized it as a symbol of de Gaulle's "soft" attitude toward Communism. Bidault was not the sole proponent of many of these positions—he was far from the only anti-communist on the Council, and his comrades individually attacked de Gaulle on terms similar to his own—but he distinguished himself by the emphasis and place his gave to these elements overall in his resistancialist vision.

Bidault's influence was not the only one apparent in CNR documents like the Manifesto, but before moving on to the other distinct current in these texts, it is worth taking a moment to determine whether Soustelle's voice stood out from Bidault's or remained indistinguishable. These two men had significantly different pasts. Soustelle, who had begun on the political left during World War II, subsequently moved to gaullism and served as a Governor General of Algeria; Bidault remained a Christian Democrat through his life, and his government service took place only in the Metropole. But both had participated in the anti-Nazi fight in some capacity (Soustelle with the Free French and Bidault in the interior Resistance), and they had worked closely for the *Algérie française* cause at least since the founding of the Vincennes Committee. Of all the prominent figures of the CNR, they were the two whose messages and rhetoric were most likely to overlap. It is difficult to evaluate this question, however, because few documents were attributed to Soustelle in particular, with the notable exception of an

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[159] Manifeste du CNR, November 19, 1962, pp. 2-3, in the BDIC, Jacques Delarue Collection, F delta res 896, Folder 6.
[160] *Ibid.*, p. 11. Capitalization in the original.

"interview" with Soustelle published in the August 1962 *Appel de la France*. At times in this text he sounded much like Bidault, denouncing "the most totalitarian regime that exists west of the Iron Curtain." He saw the gaullist regime as "fascism…already installed at the Elysée [presidential palace]," and an "unenlightened despotism founded on arbitrary police power, prisons, and concentration camps." He also chose the mounting fascism of the 1930s rather than World War II or the Resistance as his primary historical reference, claiming that "the only difference between the fascist regimes of the 1930s and that from which we currently suffer is that the Duce and Führer used dictatorship to expand their countries, while our Guide uses it to shrink his."[161] Soustelle's focus on the 1930s clearly stood apart from Bidault's continual references to the Resistance, but these references to the 1930s do not appear in CNR documents outside this interview. While Soustelle may have contributed to the more general critiques of de Gaulle that appear in these documents, he did not appear to have contributed a contrary vision of the Resistance to CNR discourse. He either supported that of Bidault or failed to challenge it.

Another current coexisted alongside the "Bidaultist" tendency prominent within CNR documents, namely a nationalist current that can likely be associated with Argoud and other military figures in the Council. While Bidault set the tone of CNR documents and broadly framed the Council's resistancialist mission, the nationalist current filled in many of the details of the CNR's program in the Manifesto and accounted for many of the pieces in the pages of *Appel de la France*. Occasionally the officers had their own bylines in *Appel*, though their influence was often obvious even when they weren't credited. One of the elements that distinguished this current was its tendency to see the Algerian War as a conflict whose stakes affected all of Europe. Bidault certainly placed the war in a European context as well; he saw France as a beachhead in the fight to defend Christian and European civilization. But he emphasized the particular importance of the French nation far more heavily than his military colleagues in the CNR, who saw the Algieran conflict and the fight for France as an opening onto a larger refashioning of European civilization. In the August 1962 *Appel*, for instance, Captian Pierre Sergent published a piece in which he picked up many of these themes. "The doctrine of the future—THE DOCTRINE OF THE WEST—is being forged," he wrote:

[161] "Extraits de l'interview de Jacques SOUSTELLE Membre du Comité exécutif du C.N.R.," *Appel de la France*, No. 5, August 1962, p. 3, in the BDIC, Jacques Delarue Collection, F delta res 896, Folder 8.

> Yes or no: must the world pass into the hands of the materialists? Yes or no: must the civilization we have inherited be condemned? Yes or no: is the guilty conscience of Europe justified?
> **As for me, I answer no.**[162]

Sergent saw a "materialist," communist threat looming over Europe, which had itself degenerated into "nothing but a fattened and unhealthy bourgeois who has allowed bankers and businessmen to manage its conscience." This degenerated Europe "no longer believes in its mission; it no longer has a soul."[163]

Unlike Bidault, whose resistancialist framework drew on references from the 1940s, Sergent and his military colleagues thus built a framework more in tune with the geopolitical climate of the Cold War. They imagined a Europe caught between the opposing and equally immoral forces of capitalism and communism, and they aspired to restore the spiritual center to a nation and a civilization that had lost it before the crass materialism of the two warring ideologies. To this end, significant portions of the Manifesto and a key policy communiqué from August 1962 elaborated a social and economic vision that a victorious France would institute throughout its empire after the Algerian War. Most important, according to the latter document these reforms would be "founded on the respect of the human person with his harmonious development on a spiritual, moral, and material level in mind."[164] The Manifesto laid out something of a middle way between communism and "the brutal quest for profit," accepting some form of a planned economy to "raise the standard of living for all the French" and to "eliminate social injustice."[165] These texts tended to envision a corporatist system in which the state would play a key (but not dominant) role in balancing power relations between capital and labor. But they envisioned none of these forces—capital, labor, or the state—as the social force that would bring about these changes. According to the front-page editorial in the November 1962 *Appel de la France*, "the nation must find its soul again," and "it is to the University that this role belongs, completed by that of the army."[166] In their capacities as students and soldiers, the youth of France would renew France and embark on the remaking of Europe.

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[162] "La volonté de se battre au-delà des doctrines," Pierre Sergent, *Appel de la France*, No. 5, August 1962, p. 4, in the BDIC, Jacques Delarue Collection, F delta res 896, Folder 8. Capitalization and boldface in the original.
[163] *Ibid.*
[164] Communication du Conseil National de la Résistance, August 29, 1926, p. 6, in the BDIC, Jacques Delarue Collection, F delta res 939/2, Folder 8: Conseil National de la Résistance, 28 Novembre 1961 – 5 janvier 1963.
[165] Manifeste du CNR, *op. cit.*, p. 6.
[166] "Tes ainés sont perdus : Jeune, c'est pour toi que nous combattons," *Appel de la France*, No. 8, November 1962, p. 1, in the BDIC, Jacques Delarue Collection, F delta res 896, Folder 8.

Bidault was most definitely not responsible for this current of CNR thought—nowhere in his personal writings did he draw up detailed social and economic reforms, and he saw the Resistance and the parliamentary process, not the university and the military, as the institutions that would protect and restore France. Bidault's anti-communism meant that he, too, understood the Algerian War largely in terms of the Cold War, but he never developed this angle with the detail and passion evident in the nationalist current. An almost generational difference animated the tension between these two viewpoints: while Bidault looked to the past—i.e., to the Resistance—to find a model for the anti-independence movement, the nationalist current focused on the youth of France, hoping to fashion them into instrument of social revival and transformation. Altogether, these points of tension made the nationalist current the only real alternative vision of the new "Resistance" within the CNR, although its proponents appear not to have turned these tensions into an outright struggle with Bidault. Whatever threat this vision posed to Bidault's representation of the organization, it did not contradict his own vision, which prevailed as long as Bidault remained the Council's president and semi-official spokesman. The balance of power would tip in the officers' favor only after Bidault's forced exile to Brazil, when Sergent reoriented the CNR along the principles outlined by the nationalist current. I will examine this final and decisive defeat for Bidault's resistancialist vision in the final section of this chapter.

The Struggle for the Meaning of the Resistance Within *Algérie Française*

The CNR vs. the OAS

As we have seen in previous chapters, the end of the Algerian War saw the emergence of the Resistance as a watchword for *Algérie française*, initially with the occasional reference to the Resistance by the OAS and more fully with Bidault and the new CNR. But Bidault was not alone in trying to flesh out ideas about the Resistance as a philosophical, organizational, and rhetorical model—he competed with Salan and the OAS, beginning March-April 1962, over the right to claim the mantle of the Resistance and define its meaning for the Algerian conflict. This conflict was born in March 1962, when Salan established the *Conseil National de la Résistance Française en Algérie* (CNRFA, the French National Council of Resistance in Algeria).[167] The

[167] "Ordonnance du 30 Mars 1962 instituant en Métropole Un Conseil National de la Résistance," March 30, 1962, p. 1, in the BDIC, Jacques Delarue Collection, F delta res 888/3, Folder: 1962, documents divers.

announcement of Bidault's CNR followed only a week later, producing a confusing situation in which two Resistance Councils, each allied to a different leader, claimed political control over the same broad movement.

The close timing of these two announcements was more than a coincidence, though it is difficult to identify the precise reasons why the OAS and Bidault each created a new CNR around the same time and what role Bidault had in inspiring the CNRFA. One thing we know with certainty is that Bidault began laying the groundwork for his CNR beginning in October 1961, a full month prior to the dissolution of the Vincennes Committee by the state.[168] His contacts within *Algérie française* put him in touch with OAS operatives like Maurice Gingembre (with whom Bidault maintained ongoing contact starting as early as December 1960), and in early 1962, just prior to his clandestine period, Bidault found himself given to comments such as, "Salan is a wise, courageous, and prudent man."[169] Given such statements and connections, the most likely picture is that the idea of a new Resistance Council originated with Bidault and was developed in talks between Bidault and other *Algérie française* partisans, including OAS members. Salan was simply the first to attempt to put it into practice, though whether he did so with Bidault's consent is unclear. Whether betrayed by or dissatisfied with Salan's efforts, or simply desirous of reviving the Resistance in his own way, Bidault riposted with the announcement of his own CNR, without even an acknowledgement of the CNRFA's existence. Salan added another level of complication at the moment of his arrest in April by French forces in Algiers when he released a note designating Bidault as his "replacement at the head of the OAS."[170]

The historiography on the CNR and the OAS is somewhat confused over these matters, obscuring the extent to which the competing Councils constituted a fight over the meaning of the Resistance for *Algérie française*. Earlier scholarly and popular texts failed to distinguish Bidadult's CNR as an independent effort, taking it to be a direct continuation of the CNRFA.

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[168] Dard, *op. cit.*, p. 184.

[169] "Audition de Mme BIDAULT Suzanne," May 2, 1962, p. 2, in the BDIC, Jacques Delarue Collection, F delta res 939/2, Folder 6: "Documents de Police Relatifs à l'OAS"; "Activité de M. George BIDAULT depuis la création du Comité de Vincennes," police summary, April 17, 1962, in the BDIC, Jacques Delarue collection, F delta res 896, Folder 7.

[170] Handwritten note from Raoul Salan, dated April 1, 1962, in the BDIC, Jacques Delarue Collection, F delta res 896, Folder 12. A sticky note attached to the document—perhaps written by an archivist but more likely by the collection donor, Jacques Delarue, a former French police official—notes that "Salan has just been [imprisoned?] at the Santé [a Parisian prison]. He designates Georges Bidault to replace him – and not to succeed him – the date and the place, Algiers, are false. The two documents are removed from the Santé the day of, by a lawyer."

They also believed that Salan had designated Bidault to run the CNRFA and that his April note simply and naturally extended this authority to the OAS in the event of Salan's arrest. These positions dovetailed cleanly with the belief, common in 1962 and recurrent in the historiography up to the present day, that the CNR was just a makeover for the OAS, the same organization with a different image. Rémi Kauffer, for instance, argued that Bidault headed the "new CNR-OAS" created at Salan's orders, and even otherwise excellent scholarship like Olivier Dard's *Voyage au coeur de l'OAS* falls into the same traps.[171] These confusions may have resulted from a less than careful reading of admittedly confusing and contradictory sources or the simple acceptance of the received wisdom that the CNR was nothing more than a rebranding of the OAS. Whatever the case, the internal documents of the CNR and the CNRFA and Bidualt's personal writings make it clear that Bidault's CNR was a truly independent effort, not just an offshoot of the OAS. The founding ordinances of the CNRFA identify Salan, not Bidault, as its president, for instance, and Bidault's CNR never makes any reference to its OAS predecessor and competitor.[172] The councils outlined parallel and competing ideas about what the Resistance would mean for *Algérie française*, and they thus represented a struggle between Bidault's and Salan's camps to control the ideology and message of the anti-independence movement.

These organization's respective conceptualizations of the Resistance did, however, overlap to an extent. Insofar as both were responding to the increasingly imminent prospect of an independent Algeria, they agreed that the Resistance was a necessary recourse to clandestine activity to fight against the "totalitarian" gaullist threat to France. Like the CNR, the CNRFA referenced portions of the constitution that "recall the fundamental principle that the territorial integrity [of the country] may not be threatened" and to "declare the President of the Republic and the French Government stripped of his duties."[173] It even referenced the French constitution of 1793, which, "even in the times of terror…proclaimed in Articles 2, 33, 34, and 35 that, against tyranny, insurrection is the most sacred of duties."[174] Through detailed references like this to the legal order and France's republican history, alongside attacks on "totalitarianism and its accomplices," the OAS attempted to establish its republican bona fides, to shift its image from

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[171] See Rémi Kauffer, *L'O.A.S.: Histoire d'une organisation secrète*, Paris: Fayard 1986, p. 388; Kauffer, *OAS: Histoire de la guerre franco-française*, Paris: Fayard 2002; and Dard, *Voyage*, pp. 264-266, 320.
[172] See, for instance, "Ordonnance du 30 Mars 1962 instituant en Métropole Un Conseil National de la Résistance," *op. cit.*
[173] "Décisions du Conseil National de la Résistance Française en Algérie (C.N.R.F.A.)," EPA/N°27, March 13, 1962, in the BDIC, Jacques Delarue Collection, F delta res 888/3, Folder: 1962, documents divers.
[174] "Ordonnance du 30 Mars 1962 instituant en Métropole Un Conseil National de la Résistance," *op. cit.*, p. 2.

that of a lawless terrorist organization to that of a principled and legally grounded defender of the nation and the republican order.[175] The CNRFA claimed, just as the CNR would, that a violation of territorial integrity and the republican regime had sparked a new resistance and that this very order of law and justice was what the Resistance sought to protect and restore.

The CNRFA image of a "republican Resistance" differed from Bidault's and the CNR's in several ways. Surprisingly, it made virtually no concrete references to the historical anti-Nazi Resistance of the 1940s. While the OAS leadership had no shortage of alumni of the Resistance, it lacked a Bidault who would expound on the spirit of the Resistance and sprinkle texts and interviews with references to the great events and heroes of the anti-Nazi struggle.[176] While the name of the CNRFA unmistakably referenced the original CNR, its documents were otherwise dry and somewhat technical. They explained the reason for the new organization's existence and outlined its structure and mission; the reference to the Resistance in particular likely served just as an attempt at legitimation. The CNRFA also differed from the second CNR in the likely motivations of its founders. As we saw in Chapter 2, Bidault revived the CNR and promoted a developed re-visioning of the Resistance at a moment when he seemed to think that legal opposition to de Gaulle no longer left him much room to maneuver. It coincided with his passing into illegal activity outside of France and appeared to fulfill a need to legitimize and conceptualize this form of political activity. The OAS, by contrast, had already been a clandestine organization for some time. Drawing more substantially on the Resistance seemed to speak not to the Resistance as a core source of inspiration but to an effort to establish some legal basis for the Secret Army and to remake its reputation. "Up to the present," according to an early CNRFA ordinance, "the organization and action of the Secret Army were developed with neither legal nor judicial bases. This situation is very prejudicial to the accomplishing of its mission. It is therefore important that it be furnished with indisputable foundations," which it sought to do with its new Resistance Council.[177] The candor of this statement, such a clear

[175] "Proclamation du C.N.R.F.A.," in the BDIC, Jacques Delarue Collection F delta res 888/3, Folder: 1962, "documents divers."
[176] To name just a handful of OAS leaders with Resistance credentials: Yves Godard had fought in an armed Resistance group, a *maquis* of the Glières plateau in southern France; Roger Degueldre had belonged to another, larger armed Resistance movement, the *Francs tireurs et partisans français* (FTPF); and Pierre Château-Jobert had joined the gaullist forces in London in 1940. (Dard, *op. cit.*, pp. 86-88; Henry Rousso, "La Second Guerre Mondiale dans la mémoire de droites," in *Histoire des droites en France*, Paris: Gallimard 1992, vol. 2, p, 587.)
[177] "Ordonnance N°2, Exposé des motifs," in the BDIC, Jacques Delarue Collection, F delta res 888/3, Folder: 1962, documents divers.

admission of the OAS's need for a new "marketing strategy," is striking.[178] In this light, though, it is also most understandable that so many people believed Bidault's CNR to be an OAS offshoot. It was often difficult to distinguish CRNFA and CNR documents and statements, especially if the latter did not carry Bidault's name. Under these circumstances, many might have seen in the CNR the OAS's attempt at rebranding that the CNRFA represented—and believed they had documentary evidence to back up this view.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the CNRFA presented a "militarized" version of the Resistance, in contrast to the CNR's more "political" conception. Even as it drew on the French republican tradition, the CNRFA defined itself as an organization in which officers and military action took priority. While documents characterized this council as an interim authority designed to protect the interests of France until regular government could be restored, they qualified that "the National Council of Resistance has absolutely no pretention to present itself as a sovereign assembly, which can only be formed by representatives elected by the Nation to a constitutional Parliament."[179] (As we have seen in Chapter 2, Bidault's CNR, on the other hand, explicitly declared itself a National Assembly in its attempt to situate itself in the republican tradition.) Despite distancing itself from the idea of a representative assembly, the CNRFA still attributed to itself the power to "assume the exercise of national sovereignty in all French territories liberated from the *de facto* authorities." It attributed this power to the Commission of Government and National Defense, the latter half of whose title indicated the place given to military considerations and authority.[180] The CNRFA drew from foundational military documents alongside its republican and constitutional references to justify its fight, most notably the Military Code of Justice.[181] And, of course, until the general's arrest in early April 1962, almost every CRNFA document reiterated that Salan presided over the body and that all major decisions issued directly from him. The attempt to play up the military dimension of the

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[178] This will to find a legal basis for the OAS and its action bore little fruit. As Olivier Dard points out, while this "project…was not, to all appearances, of fascist or totalitarian inspiration," comparing it "to the reality on the ground…invites one to take stock of the disconnect between the pretentions and strategic means put to work by the OAS and the expectations of its supporters. At the time when the OAS radicalized its methods as it searched for ways to move to an insurrectional phase, the contrast between discourse and practice was obvious." (Dard, *op. cit.*, p. 266.)

[179] "Note [*illegible text*] Le Conseil National de la Résistance," in the BDIC, Jacques Delarue Collection, F delta res 888/3, Folder: 1962, documents divers.

[180] "Ordonnance du 14 Mars 1962 définissant les pouvoirs du C.G.D.N.," March 14, 1962, in the BDIC, Jacques Delarue Collection, F delta res 888/3, Folder: 1962, documents divers. "*De facto*" was a phrase common in *Algérie française* circles used to qualify de Gaulle's government as illegitimate.

[181] "Ordonnance du 30 Mars 1962 instituant en Métropole Un Conseil National de la Résistance," *op. cit.*, p. 2.

CNRFA was clear—and, moreover, unsurprising, as the OAS name already presented it as an army, first and foremost. Bidault's efforts to distance his conception of the Resistance from military associations and frame it as a political and civic endeavor becomes even clearer in this context and in the broader context of the CNR-OAS struggle over the meaning of the Resistance.

These parallel Resistance Councils co-existed through at least mid-summer 1962, though Salan's arrest in April meant that circumstances worked in the CNR's favor from the beginning. CNRFA documents began to acknowledge Bidault as the President of the National Council of Resistance and dropped the "FA" from "CNRFA," though they continued to refer to founding "ordinances" from March, which Bidault's CNR never did. At around this same time, in June 1962, Bidault and his comrades moved to position themselves for dominance within the *Algérie française* movement by condemning the Mostefaï Accords concluded between OAS leader Jean-Jacques Susini and Chawki Mostefaï, a representative of the FLN. This attempt at a political settlement between the OAS and the FLN, announced in June 1962 after over a month of negotiations, found little purchase within either organization and failed to influence events on the ground. Bidault was thus far from alone in condemning this agreement, but with this decision he also aligned himself with the official leadership of the OAS under General Gardy, Salan's official successor. Gardy, in spite of his title, had enjoyed less real control over the OAS than Susini, but the Mostefaï Accords dealt a blow to the latter's authority and allowed Bidault an opportunity to take advantage of the internal division by aligning with Gardy.[182] Months passed before these actions meant much more, but during that time the CNRFA ceased to be even an ineffective competitor. And in November, following the "Lisbon Congress" in which OAS and CNR leaders met to discuss possibilities for cooperation, Gardy published the following statement:

> The rallying, without reservation, to the CNR of the combat units of the former OAS-Algeria is henceforth complete. While I myself am joining [the CNR] with several officers from the Oranie [the Western portion of coastal Algeria centered on Oran], Colonels Godard, Vaudrey, Gardes and Dufour have also committed themselves. The basic structures of the Organization in metropolitan France will be maintained.[183]

[182] On the division of authority between Gardy and Susini, see Jacques Dalloz, *Georges Bidault: Biographie politique*, Paris: Harmattan 1992, p. 419.
[183] Cited in Dard, *op. cit.*, pp. 325-326.

Olivier Dard points out that, in reality, no such integration took place—"not one colonel became involved in the CNR"—no doubt because Gardy lacked the full authority implied by his title as head of the OAS.[184] But with Susini largely discredited by the Mostefaï affair, the announcement of an integration of the OAS into the CNR was a symbolic victory for Bidault and his vision of the Resistance. For the first time, the OAS had acknowledged the CNR as the leader of the fight for *Algérie française*—and by so doing had recognized Bidault's resistancialist vision of this fight as well. November 1962 was thus the peak moment for Bidault's new conception of the Resistance, when more *Algérie française* partisans than ever recognized its legitimacy in their struggle.

Beyond the OAS: The Question of Pétainism and Nationalism

While the CNR and the OAS were easily the largest and most important *Algérie française* organizations in 1962-1963, they were not the only such actors, and not everyone agreed to reframe their anti-independence action in resistancialist terms. Certain groups might have been expected to play a key role in such resistance: former supporters of Marshall Pétain during World War II, for instance, might have been expected to push back against a resistancialist vision of *Algérie française* that set up Pétain as a (negative) comparison to de Gaulle and positioned Vichy as the totalitarian enemy of France. But it is difficult to say whether any of the Resistance to the CNR and Bidault's vision stemmed from the opposition of former collaborators. This was not for lack of a presence within *Algérie française* forces. Among the first OAS predecessors to organize in the early years of the Algerian War were militant nationalist groups, in particular *Jeune Nation* (Young Nation), founded in the late 1940s by the pétainist Sidos brothers.[185] Even under the CNR, pages of *Appel de la France* frequently referenced those Hungarians who resisted a Soviet crackdown on dissent in 1956—a favorite reference point among nationalist groups.[186] Henry Rousso has written of the "former collaborators and neo-fascists" of *Algérie française* who worked alongside former resisters and others with republican values "rigorously opposed" to their own.[187] But he does not explore the

[184] *Ibid.*, p. 326.
[185] *Ibid.*, p. 19.
[186] For one example, see "Il y a six ans, les Patriotes Hongrois au nom de la Civilisation Occidentale se soulevaient contre la domination rouge,"*Appel de la France*, No. 8, August 1962, p. 3, in the BDIC, Jacques Delarue Collection, F delta res 896, Folder 8; Dard, *op. cit.*, p. 19.
[187] Rousso, *op. cit.*, p. 587.

tensions these contradictions may have produced or explain why there was not pétainist pushback against the resistancialist vision. Existing documents do not permit definitive answers to these questions, but pétainists likely acceded to Bidault's resistancialist vision because they had little other choice. With the French state committed to Algerian independence and the OAS crumbling daily, the CNR became the most prominent and credible force representing *Algérie française*. Former collaborators and other far-right nationalists had no other organized path to fighting for their goals. If they entertained serious reservations about Bidault's framing of the fight, they kept them to themselves.

There was one possible exception to this generalization, an effort led by a former resister: Colonel Pierre Château-Jobert, who led a small *Algérie française* splinter group that rejected CNR dominance in the movement. At the time of the OAS-CNR merger in November 1962, two marginal groups within *Algérie française* united to oppose it: the *Mouvement Français de Combat Contre Révolutionnaire* (MCR, the French Movement of Counterrevolutionary Combat) and the *Forces Nouvelles Françaises* (FNF, New French Forces), an OAS franchise that had already existed and published propaganda for some time. Château-Jobert, the former leader of the OAS-Constantine, did not attend the "Lisbon Congress" in November, and while Dr. Bernard Lefèvre's FNF participated, it quickly joined Château-Jobert's oppositional faction.[188] Not unlike the military figures within the CNR, this bloc promoted embraced a nationalist, corporatist program and sought the moral and spiritual awakening of France through a revival of its Christian tradition.[189] But the "Château-Jobert/Lefèvre current," unlike the military current in the CNR, had the liberty to oppose Bidault's vision of the Resistance. Its partisans declared their unwillingness to be part of a "system that leads us to catastrophe, whether that system is called de Gaulle or it bears the name of the dregs of the Fourth Republic."[190] They thus assimilated gaullists and "Bidaulists," seeing in each the agent of a parliamentary system antithetical to their vision of France. Because of this antiparliamentary stance in general and Soustelle in particular—they perceived his historical closeness to de Gaulle as fatally compromising to the

[188] Anonymous tract distributed in Lisbon, November 13, 1962, pp. 1-2, in the BDIC, Jacques Delarue Collection, F delta res 939/2, Folder 8: Conseil National de la Résistance, 28 Novembre 1961 – 5 janvier 1963; Police summary of currents within the OAS and the CNR, pp. 1-2, in the BDIC, Jacques Delarue Collection, F delta res 939/2, Folder 8: Conseil National de la Résistance, 28 Novembre 1961 – 5 janvier 1963.
[189] Police summary of currents within the OAS and the CNR, *op. cit.*, pp. 1-2.
[190] Ballot from the Lisbon Congress, in the BDIC, Jacques Delarue Collection, F delta res 939/2, Folder 8: Conseil National de la Résistance, 28 Novembre 1961 – 5 janvier 1963.

CNR—they explicitly rejected CNR leadership of *Algérie française* and Bidault's resistancialist framing.[191]

Did the Château-Jobert/Lefèvre faction constitute a pétainist revolt against Bidault's vision of *Algérie française* as a new Resistance? It is not clear that former Vichy supporters or collaborators played a key role in this faction, and short of positive evidence for this hypothesis, it necessarily remains conjectural. Alternatively, we may construe this current as pétainist in the broader sense that the FNF and the MCR drew on the same nationalist tradition that Vichy had. This generalization appears tempting; the FNF and MCR certainly found their values incompatible with the CNR's republican principles. But while most nationalists would acknowledge this contradiction between nationalism and republicanism, not all saw a conflict between nationalism and the notion of the Resistance. In a striking July 1962 letter, for instance, one former resister and longtime *Algérie française* activist named Jean Meningaud explained to Bidault why he no longer supported the CNR. He prefaced the letter by outlining his motivations for writing it, notably "deference to the role that was yours when I was myself an officer in the Maquis of the Southwest, and…respect for the memory of my father, Prefect of the Resistance, deceased at Neuengamme [concentration camp], who held you in high esteem, as I do myself." Having established his Resistance credentials, he goes on to outline his *Algérie française* résumé before stating his main argument against Bidault:

> I know…why I have fought: to preserve French Algeria and, as an obvious consequence (as I see it), to overturn the republican regime directly responsible for the loss of the Empire, the failure of the Nation and the communist expansion.
>
> And yet, Algeria is lost, and they tell me that you are pursuing the reestablishment of the republic at the same time as you fight against communism?
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> If this is your objective, I cannot join you in it….[192]

Meningaud first committed to the CNR because of his own Resistance history and the value he saw in a new Resistance. Like Bidault, he saw such an effort as the fight to defend the French nation, but they disagreed over whether the republic was a part of the national heritage worth defending. While it is difficult to generalize from such an isolated piece of evidence, this letter suggests that not everyone who saw *Algérie française* as a new Resistance supported the

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[191] *Ibid.*; Anonymous tract distributed in Lisbon, *op. cit.*, pp. 1-2.

[192] Letter from Jean Meningaud, lawyer at the Philippeville bar, to Georges Bidault, July 7, 1962, pp. 1-3, in the BDIC, Jacques Delarue Collection, F delta res 939/2, Folder 8: Conseil National de la Résistance, 28 Novembre 1961 – 5 janvier 1963.

republicanism so essential to Bidault's and the OAS's re-visioning of the Resistance. Republicans and antiparliamentarians alike may have seen in the Resistance a model for the defense of France that did not rely on any particular ideology but cohered around the consensus that French Algeria must not be lost. In this specific respect, the movement did not differ from the anti-Nazi Resistance, which itself unified a wide variety of political actors around the common goal of opposing the Occupation.

Meningaud's letter may also help us understand why there was no serious pushback from former Vichy supporters against Bidault's resistancialist framework. While they would not have shared Meningaud's past in the Resistance, they, too, may have accepted a resistancialist framework because they saw it as a "big tent" for all opponents of Algerian independence. Unlike Meningaud, who ultimately decided he could not endorse the CNR's republicanism, they may have chosen to subordinate this disagreement to the higher goal of defending the "territorial integrity" of France. Of course, there is no positive evidence to support this conjecture, but it remains one possible explanation of the silence of former Vichy supporters before Bidault's new vision of the Resistance.

The Lost Cause of Public Opinion

Whatever partial success Bidault may have enjoyed in imposing his vision on *Algérie française*, public opinion in France and abroad was almost uniformly unreceptive to Bidault's framing of his efforts as a new Resistance. The press's reaction to the CNR ranged from dismissive—the Council rarely made the front page of *Le Monde*, for instance—to hostile, labeling the CNR as little more than the OAS in disguise.[193] The foreign press showed scarcely more tolerance. While Anglophone media outlets interviewed Bidault on several occasions—most notably the BBC in January 1963, though the *New York Times* and a handful of other papers granted him several interviews—they were capable of showing him as much disdain and vitriol as the French press. In March 1963, shortly before Bidault's exile from Europe, the *Times* ran a biting editorial by C. L. Sulzberger, then one of its leading foreign correspondents. Entitled "Requiem for a Living Shade," the piece as a "tragic, embittered man who might in a sense be called a casualty of World War II." Sulzberger also saw the new CNR as a "mockery of his

[193] In August 1962, for instance, *L'Aurore* characterized Bidault as "former prime minister and current leader of the OAS, transformed into the C.N.R. (National Council of Resistance)." ("Mandat d'arrêt contre Georges Bidault," *L'Aurore*, August 10, 1962.)

[Bidault's] old C.N.R." and a successor to the OAS. He described Bidault as someone who had become "obsessed by bitterness and jealousies," his conversation as "incoherent, emotional, and illogical."[194] He refused Bidault and his political project the slightest credibility or legitimation.

Most Western governments were equally unreceptive to Bidault's vision and action. Over the course of 1962, the French state actively pursued Bidault on charges of conspiracy against the state and leading subversive activity in the Metropole.[195] In July, the National Assembly also voted 241-72 to lift Bidault's parliamentary immunity. (Of 57 representatives of the MRP—the Christian Democratic party Bidault had co-founded—all were absent or abstained except for two, who voted in favor of the measure.)[196] And after Argoud's arrest in February 1963, the European countries in which he had resided over the previous year became increasingly hostile to him. Germany, Austria, and Italy either insisted he end his political activity or take it to a new country. When the United States rejected an asylum request and Portugal refused to allow Bidault to remain in Lisbon, Brazil finally agreed to admit him—on the condition that he cease all political activity. Exhausted and with little choice, Bidault and his secretary Guy Ribeaud boarded a plane for Latin America in March 1963.[197]

From Resistance to Revolution

With Argoud arrested, Bidault in exile, and Soustelle still unable to return to France, the CNR's executive committee found itself decimated. Pierre Sergent stepped up to fill the void, and Gardy, the only remaining member of the old Executive Committee, ratified Sergent as the Council's new leader in a *Jeune Révolution* editorial in April 1963. He gladly framed the CNR as the successor to the OAS and announced that while "the Elders have shown the way" the "hour of the Youth has sounded."[198] Sergent's leadership allowed the CNR to hobble along for several more years, but it also spelled the end of the Council's resistancialist period under Bidault. With the former resisters and republican leaders out of the way, Sergent transformed the ideology of the old nationalist current into the official line of the CNR, promoting a more nationalist and corporatist vision of France while explicitly rejecting Bidault's new vision of the

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[194] C. L. Sulzberger, "Requiem for a Living Shade," *The New York Times*, March 16, 1963, p. 6.
[195] "Mandat d'arrêt contre Georges Bidault" *op cit.*
[196] Alphonse Dufau, "La levée de l'immunité parlementaire de M. Bidault est prononcée par 241 voix contre 72," *Le Parisien Libéré*, July 6, 1962.
[197] Georges Bidault, *D'une résistance à l'autre*, Paris: Siècle 1965, pp. 299-309.
[198] Letter from General Paul Gardy, April 14, 1963, reprinted in *Jeune Révolution*, May 26, 1963, p. 3, in the BDIC, Jacques Delarue Collection, F delta res 896, Folder 8.

Resistance. In a mid-1963 issue of *Appel de la France*, he issued an official statement outlining the organization's new principles and its transformation into the "National Council of Revolution":

> The fight is not over…[b]ut it is no longer a question of resistance for modification or reform. The spirit of revolution must triumph over the spirit of resistance. We must now change the face of a society entirely responsible for and compromised by the Algerian disaster; we must reject its structures and infuse fresh blood into the words "liberty, fraternity, and solidarity."
>
> […]
>
> Those who lead this country to its loss, and in particular the *de facto* head of state, are henceforth responsible before me, as they will be tomorrow before the people and before History. I have decided to take charge of the Secret Army and transform the National Council of Resistance into the National Council of Revolution.[199]

Every element of the new message rejected the vision that Bidault had crafted. Even the phrase "liberty, fraternity, and solidarity," which substituted "solidarity" for "equality" in the usual republican slogan, reminded Sergent's readers that he stood within the French tradition, but not the republican tradition.

Along with a handful of the few remaining OAS and *Algérie française* alumni, Sergent continued to churn out CNR propaganda for several years.[200] In place of Bidault's vision of recent history—i.e., that the Resistance represented a glorious patriotic defense against Nazism and fascism but that de Gaulle and the Fifth Republic have done untold damage to France—the main documents of Sergent's CNR painted a picture of a nation that long suffered from a moral and spiritual rot revealed by the Nazi victory of 1940. "Why We Fight," a new manifesto released in mid-1963, claimed that the "defeat of 1940 had revealed the depth of the evil," and the subsequent Fourth Republic "did not know how or want to react." A "large portion of the ruling classes, the University, and the Church" had fallen victim to materialist "subversion, or at least resignation," while the "mass of the population, deceived and disoriented, has turned in on itself with short-sighted egoism."[201] Likely for these reasons, an internal document outlined membership principles that sought to avoid the corrupting effects of these years of decay:

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[199] "Proclamation du Capitaine SERGENT," *Appel de la France*, No. 11, p. 1, in the BDIC, Jacques Delarue Collection, F delta res 888/3, Folder 3: 1963.
[200] Dard, *op cit.*, pp. 327-328.
[201] "Pourquoi nous combattons," 1963, p. 3, in the BDIC, Jacques Delarue Collection, F delta res 896, Folder 8.

> It is still necessary that the core members of the council come from the postwar generation, those who were not so bruised by '39-'45, those who have not fallen under the gaullist spell and whose leaders have not collaborated with the old parties of the republics: It is essential that its members, on a political level, but new, young men, as our "elders" entertain too much resentment between each other.[202]

These guidelines clearly targeted Bidault and his colleagues, and while they did not criticize the Resistance explicitly, they implied that little of any value emerged from World War II, even the Resistance. The reference to resentment strangely echoed C. L. Sulzberger's editorial on Bidault, but it reflected an unsurprising frustration before *Algérie française*'s repeated setbacks after 1958.

In fact, in another, more radical response to these frustrations, Sergent's CNR began to downplay the centrality of the Algerian conflict altogether. This new stance took the old nationalist current's interest in the European implications of the conflict and placed them center-stage. "Why We Fight" declared that while the *Algérie française* fight had at first "been a question…of defending the French land of Algeria," a cause that had "rallied a considerable number of militants," the stakes had changed. "[T]his defense of Algeria constituted just one aspect of an infinitely larger problem, that of the power of Europe and the very existence of Civilization."[203] Bidault believed in wider, civilization-scale consequences of the Algerian war, but he saw the fight against Algerian independence as valuable in itself. Sergent inverted this analysis, and even if he saw collaboration with Africa as central to the fight against communism, he believed that the French "presence there [would] not assume the same form we have known." Even the political structures of Europe would have to be transformed, notably by instituting a continent-wide collective defense system and developing a "European nationalism." To keep the CNR alive, Sergent had chosen to abandon the fight for *Algérie française* and downplay all the particularities of the French situation. (Though, ultimately, this is not especially surprising: while the fight to turn back Algerian independence may not have held an importance place in Sergent's thought in any case, the ongoing reality of that independence made any opposition to it increasingly untenable.)

Freed of a negative goal—the fight *against* independence—and of competing ideological currents within the organization, Sergent's CNR developed a more detailed, coherent program than Bidault ever had. The nationalist and corporatist ideas of the old nationalist current

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[202] "Principes fondamentaux de la révolution nationaliste," August 27, 1963, p. 2, in the Bidault Papers, French National Archives, 457/AP182, Folder: OAS Activisme.
[203] "Pourquoi nous combattons," *op cit.*, p. 1.

reappeared in elaborated form, particularly in "Why We Fight." This document denounced the two "materialist" systems of communism and "technocratic capitalism," both of which "resulted in the same inhuman and soulless conception of society."[204] It sought instead to revitalize the "Greek, Latin, Christian, and Western" bases of European civilization, which valorized both "the freedom of man" and "human collectivities."[205] In this last point, the renovated CNR's ideology differed most fundamentally from Bidault's. While Bidault and Soustelle had always argued for further political integration of colonized people, "Why We Fight" criticized the "myth of equality." "Men are equal in dignity," it said, but "not in merit or ability. Society is built on hierarchies. It belongs to elites whose value comes from their ability to lead the masses. We do not believe that the leadership of men can be determined by the will of the majority."[206] This vision was anti-egalitarian and anti-democratic, and the National Council of Revolution was proud to announce it.

But Sergent's CNR could not match its ideological coherence and ambition with material means. It lacked personnel and finances, and pursuit by gaullist forces led to the loss of two key members: Jean Curutchet, arrested in Senegal in November 1963, and Jean de Brem, fatally wounded in Paris in April of the following year.[207] Some of its members, notably Yves Guillou, would continue in long careers of far-right political activism, but the slow death of the CNR constituted the epilogue of Bidault's legacy for *Algérie française*. With Bidault's own departure, the CNR outgrew its original mission, and its values transformed in ways Bidault could not have understood or approved of. But he had no choice but to endure the death of his cause with silence in his Brazilian exile.

Conclusion

In the ideologically fractured milieus of *Algérie française*, there was little guarantee that Bidault's personal vision of the Resistance would be well received by his fellow travelers. The CNR, like many of the organizations that had preceded it, grouped together a number of political tendencies whose only common denominator was their opposition to Algerian independence. Ideological conflicts were frequent and often impeded the formulation of common goals and a broad political vision. Relative to the standard set by the OAS, Bidault enjoyed a surprising

[204] *Ibid.*, p. 2.
[205] *Ibid.*, p. 5.
[206] *Ibid.*, p. 6.
[207] Dard, *op. cit.*, pp. 327-328.

degree of success in making his resistancialist vision dominant in *Algérie française* circles. He managed to downplay competing ideological currents within the CNR and mark the Council with his vision of a patriotic defense of republican values. At the same time, he fought off a threat in Salan's competing Resistance Council, ultimately forcing the OAS to recognize the dominance of his organization and his vision in the anti-independence fight. Though he never rallied every partisan of *Algérie française*—nationalist groups outside the CNR remained fiercely independent—Bidault's qualified success showed that many anti-independence activists were receptive to the Resistance as a symbol of and model for their fight. But Bidault's achievements did not extend beyond the circles of his own movement. Public opinion, major press outlets, and many Western states remained hostile to his project and the terms in which he framed it, and his new Resistance failed as he was exiled to Brazil. Pierre Sergent reconceived the CNR as a revolutionary vehicle for an anti-communist fight across Europe, largely ceding the fight for Algeria and Bidault's resistancialist model. The success of Bidault's vision thus rose and fell with the cause of *Algérie française*, and by 1963 political developments in France snuffed out both.

CONCLUSION

A Powerful Slogan for a Lost Cause

Assessing the Legacy of Georges Bidault's Vision of the Resistance

It would be easy for those who follow Bidault's story to its end to think that he was a man preoccupied, even obsessed, by the past. In a sense, he was: he believed that the bases of France's historical greatness—its republican values, imperial holdings, and all the elements that made up its "national heritage"—were slipping away during the Algerian War and that the most urgent political priority of the day was the preservation and recovery of that heritage. But Bidault did not want to appear as though he lived exclusively in the past, and he opened the conclusion of *From One Resistance To the Other* with a brief explanation of his preoccupations:

> I leave this book, which remains incomplete between my hands. My thoughts drift back to so many events, barely touched upon here, whose consequences continue to pile up before our eyes, while they are already eaten by the three Eumenides of History: forgetting, ignorance, and the lie. I see that I have only been able to speak of the past, while it is the future that grips my thought.[208]

He spent the remainder of the conclusion analyzing the contemporary geopolitical landscape of Europe and laying out what he saw as the stakes for the future, but this final section of his memoirs comes across as somewhat disconnected from the rest. His comment on "forgetting, ignorance, and the lie" truly cuts to the heart of his project: Bidault felt that if his causes had been lost and his country's dearest values betrayed, his most urgent task was to prevent them from being forgotten. Keeping the cause alive meant reminding his fellow French men and women that it had existed in the first place. And whether one finds Bidault's arguments and his point of view persuasive, *From One Resistance To the Other* does succeed in presenting and defending a view of the Resistance that would fade both from national consciousness and from the historiography in the coming decades. Bidault framed the fight for *Algérie française* as a new Resistance not simply because he thought it would make the anti-independence cause more marketable. He believed that his action was grounded in the same principles that had guided his fight against the Occupation and collaboration during World War II: a defense of territorial integrity of the nation, an opposition to torture and other crimes against humanity, and belief in the republican values or representative democracy and the rule of law. Of course, as we have

[208] Georges Bidault, *D'une résistance à l'autre*, Paris: Siècle 1965, p. 321.

seen, other actors of the Algerian War took these same principles and reinterpreted them in different ways: some extended the resistancialist emphasis on human rights to cover anti-colonial stances, while others used the tradition as grounds for a less radical critique of French conduct during the war. But one of the goals of this thesis has been to show, against prevailing historiographical trends, that Bidault's re-imagining of the Resistance was no less valid than these others. Even with its contradictions and limitations, Bidault's new resistancialist vision was simply one of many efforts to understand the ongoing implications of the World War II Resistance for French society. Bidault sought to transcend an understanding of the Resistance as an isolated historical phenomenon and situate its values in a broader Christian, French, and republican worldview. Contrary to those who believed that the "place [of the Resistance] was at the Invalides Museum," he sought to "remove [it] from the museum…for a goal that, while identical to our original goals, no longer had the power to please them."[209]

Already by 1965, though, Bidault found himself having to remind his audience of this vision and to defend it; he already saw forgetfulness, ignorance, and lies eating away at the national awareness of his vision of the Resistance. He saw a bleak future for his vision and his cause, and historians of the Algerian War have tended to frame Bidault as a failure, his political career one of the casualties of the war. This judgment is in many ways true, in part because of several important social and political changes that took place in France in the years and decades following the Algerian War. One of these trends, which we have already begun to explore in Chapter 3, was the transformation of the *Algérie française* cause into other political projects. Sergent's transformation of the CNR into the National Council of Revolution was just one prominent example of a larger phenomenon in which the energy sustaining *Algérie française* was rechanneled to serve new projects and political goals. For instance, a number of former OAS and CNR militants—including Yves Guillou, who worked with Sergent within the Council of Revolution—went on to found the *Organisation d'action contre le communisme international* (OACI, Organization for Action Against International Communism). This secret paramilitary group founded in 1966 sat at the intersection of several far-right nationalist groups, and its name points to the internationalism and anti-communism that dominated many of these organizations.[210]

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[209] Bidault, *op. cit.*, pp. 277-278. The Invalides Museum is a national museum of military history in Paris.
[210] Olivier Dard, *Voyage au cœur de l'OAS*, Paris: Perrin 2005, pp. 328-329.

The national and historical memory of the Resistance also continued to evolve in ways that left increasingly little place for a vision like Bidault's. Henry Rousso has situated the "apogee of the gaullist mythology" of the Resistance in the mid-1960s, when the gaullist regime sought more than ever to ground its legitimacy in the heroism of the Resistance and de Gaulle's personal role in the anti-Nazi fight. The language of the regime "drew…a straight line between the Resistance in its gaullist version and all the great French republican traditions," downplaying competing narratives, ignoring other claimants to these traditions, and occulting the memory of "Franco-French" violence in both World War II and the Algerian War.[211] This vision of the Resistance left a lasting mark on French national memory of World War II, but the memory of this period also continued to evolve. In the 1960s and 1970s scholars began paying increasing attention to the experiences of Jewish communities during World War II. In France, there developed in both historical scholarship and in the national consciousness a more nuanced understanding of the nature of vichyist collaboration with the Nazi regime as well as of popular indifference to or support for anti-Semitic policies, including the extermination of thousands of French Jews.[212] In Bidault's memoirs, on the other hand, there is only one mention of Jews at all—when he compares himself during his travels of 1962-1963 to "the Wandering Jew," "armed with five pennies."[213] The new scholarship on collaboration and the Jewish experience during World War II did not displace that of the Resistance, but it forced historians to realize that the war was not a straightforward struggle between the German occupier and a glorious Resistance. An enormous project of ethnic cleansing and genocide also played a central role in the war, and Bidault's failure to acknowledge these experiences made his vision of the Resistance and the war appear even more irrelevant.

Finally, Bidault's own political career was irreversibly broken by his fight for *Algérie française*. During early years of his time in Brazil, Bidault adhered to the terms of his asylum and ceased to speak out against de Gaulle and Algerian independence. Accompanied by his wife and by his personal secretary, Guy Ribeaud, he spent time with political allies (often fellow Christian Democrats) who helped him arrange accommodations. Even in Brazil he failed to

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[211] Henry Rousso, "La Seconde Guerre Mondiale dans la mémoire des droites," in Jean-François Sirinelli (ed.), *Histoire des droites en France*, Paris: Gallimard 1992, vol. 2, pp. 589-593.
[212] Perhaps the most prominent example of a popular work on this subject is *Le Chagrin et la Pitié*, a 1971 documentary by Marcel Ophüls on resistance and collaboration in France during World War II.
[213] The original quotation: "J'ai parcouru, muni des cinq sous du Juif errant (au cours actuel), à peu près tous les pays d'Occident" (Bidault, *op. cit.*, p. 283).

escape criticism: certain Brazilian newspapers and parliamentarians (sometimes Christian Democrats themselves) criticized the Brazilian government from time to time for harboring a "French terrorist" like Bidault, and Bidault in turn used his memoirs to criticize the communist media conspiracy he believed to lie behind liberal, socialist, and progressive Christian political opinion in the country.[214] After a 1964 coup that led to military rule, Bidault again began to speak out against de Gaulle, but his audience was small. He mainly managed to publish interviews and short pieces in the far-right press—notably a monthly journal called *L'Avenir français* (The French future)—and when he released his memoirs in the presidential election year of 1965, they had few readers and little impact in the political arena.[215] He moved to Belgium in 1967 and was permitted to return to France following the 1968 law of general amnesty for *Algérie française* figures, but his remaining political life was unremarkable. Most of his publications continued to rail against the corruption and depravity of the Gaullist regime and its legacy for France, but he ceased to use the Resistance as a lens for his politics.[216] He died in Cambo-les-Bains in southwestern France in 1983.[217]

But while all of these developments did indeed cement Bidault's personal and political failure, I would like to suggest that that failure did not derive fundamentally from any special weakness in Bidault's new vision of the Resistance. Nor was that vision an inappropriate or inept way to conceptualize the fight against Algerian independence. I would contend that Bidault's resistancialist framework was in fact a surprisingly effective way to frame his fight and that it failed because the *Algérie française* movement itself failed, for reasons largely outside Bidault's control. The Resistance was more than just a convenient historical reference that Bidault could seize on in his opposition to French state policy; there were elements in the anti-Nazi fight that paralleled the fight for *Algérie française* and on which Bidault could draw to support his efforts. French empire in North Africa did play a key role in the fight against the Occupation; it served both as a key strategic location for a French military in the process of

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[214] Bidault, *op. cit.*, pp. 309-318.
[215] See, for instance, *L'Avenir français*, nos. 23-25, December 1964-February 1965, as well as the interview "Après 3 ans de silence Georges Bidault parle," *L'Esprit public*, no. 55, September 1964, pp. 36-38, all in the Bidault Papers, French National Archives, 457/AP182, Folder: Georges Bidault 1963-1966; Dard, *op. cit.*, p. 326.
[216] See, for instance, Georges Bidault, *Le Point: entretiens avec Guy Ribeaud*, Paris: La Table Ronde 1968; and Bidault's preface to *De Gaulle l'impuissant*, Paris: André Figueras 1970, pp. 9-15.
[217] "Biographie extraite du dictionnaire des parlementaires français de 1940 à 1958 (La documentation française)," Georges Bidault, from the "Base de données des députés français depuis 1789," on the website of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/sycomore/fiche.asp?num_dept=788. Accessed February 11, 2013.

rebuilding itself and as a site from which elements of the interior and exterior Resistance began to rebuild French government institutions. Moreover, Bidault was right to point out that de Gaulle, in speeches and texts from World War II, hammered away at the importance of the Empire to the Resistance and to French military and political power more generally. Finally, *Algérie française* was no less ideologically diverse than the Resistance, and the political divisions within the former did not contradict Bidault's use of the Resistance to characterize it. Both fights drew their appeal, strength, and coherence not from common political beliefs but a shared *opposition* to something—Nazi occupation in the first case, and the loss of French Algeria in the second. Indeed, many key elements within *Algérie française* were receptive to using the Resistance as a lens to understand their activities. Even if some nationalist currents might never accept such a formulation, many of the key actors embraced republican values and language and saw resistancialist ideas as useful assets to their cause.

Bidault's vision ultimately found itself consigned to the "dustbin of history" not because of conceptual or strategic weaknesses but because he married it to a cause that was already destined for failure. By the time Bidault embarked on his clandestine life and founded the new CNR, *Algérie française*'s ship had already begun to sink. Algerian independence loomed on the horizon, the war was increasingly unpopular with the metropolitan French public, and the gaullist regime had long ago backed off any commitment to keeping Algeria French. Unable to find support from other European governments, the OAS and the CNR were progressively picked apart by the French military and security forces, and financing the cause became a bigger and bigger problem. The gaullist regime easily outclassed *Algérie française* in terms of resources, and while Bidault's constant complaints of state censorship and media manipulation exaggerated the regime's influence, he was right to see his enemy as vastly more powerful than his movement. Short of a miraculous reversal of these political and material disadvantages, *Algérie française* could not help but fail by the time Bidault founded his CNR, however strong a vision and message Bidault might propose for the movement. It is worth noting, too, that when Sergent took control of the CNR, he did not reject the Resistance as a poor model for *Algérie française*. Rather, he rejected Bidault's resistancialist vision and the fight for *Algérie française en bloc.* This move was a rejection nonetheless, but it constitutes a modest reminder that Bidault imposed a vision on the movement that stuck till the very end.

Of course, Bidault's effort undeniably failed to convince anyone outside the movement that his cause was worthwhile. In a 1964 letter "to all [his] friends"— his former and current companions in the anti-independence fight—he explained this mass rejection as an effect of the "depoliticization" of the French population. "It is true," he wrote, "that our country is depoliticized like all others. France under Vichy was even more so."[218] He believed the majority of the French population to have been pacified and politically neutralized by the gaullist regime, removed from the political process and fed a stream of lies that prevented them from understanding the decay that beset their nation. While this explanation of the failure of Bidault's vision is hardly convincing, "explaining a negative"—i.e., explaining why the French population did *not* respond favorably to Bidault's vision—presents many difficulties. Olivier Wieviorka has argued that the proliferation of reinterpretations of the Resistance during the Algerian War and persistent disagreement over meaning of the Resistance to French society rendered it meaningless as a slogan and a recruiting tool. It lost its meaning as a patriotic rallying cry when those who evoked it could no longer agree on what, precisely, their patriotism should defend.[219] Arguably there is some truth to this, but the failure of Bidault's vision also likely resulted from the dominance the OAS achieved within *Algérie française*. As de Gaulle's government continued through the early 1960s to shut down groups that opposed Algerian independence, supporters of *Algérie française* found fewer and fewer legal channels to fight for their cause. In 1961, for a brief time the Vincennes Committee and the OAS were the only major groups within their cause, and when the state banned the Committee in November, only the OAS remained. The Secret Army alone now embodied the fight against independence. Public opinion came to associate the cause of *Algérie française* with indiscriminate violence and political illegitimacy, and Bidault and the CNR never managed to shake these associations. They also had no choice but to work with OAS groups and leaders, which did not help to dispel the belief that the CNR was the direct successor of the OAS. Ultimately, gaullist pressure on *Algérie française* and the Secret Army's hegemony within the movement proved to be constraints Bidault could not surmount. He could not convince more than a small group of already hardened militants that his vision of the Resistance was anything but a ruse.

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[218] "Message de Georges Bidault," Letter, November 1964, pp. 1-2, in the Bidault Papers, French National Archives, 457/AP182, Folder: Georges Bidault 1963-1966.

[219] Olivier Wieviorka, "Les (non) incidences du procès de Nuremberg: l'affaire des '121,'" in Annette Wieviorka (ed.), *Les Procès de Nuremberg et de Tokyo*, Bruxelles: André Versailles 2010, p. 296.

There is thus something tragic in the rise and fall of Bidault's neo-resistancialist project. To all appearances, he genuinely believed in the justice of his cause and in their grounding in republican principles. But he linked these convictions and his ferocious determination to a defense of the colonial system, which ensured the social and political subjugation of millions of Algerians to the European residents of North Africa. If Bidault's goals may not have been admirable, his absolute commitment to them cannot fail to impress. Perhaps Bidault's biographer, Jacques Dalloz, best summed up this tragedy as he commented on the failure of Bidault and Soustelle's project in 1963: "Bidault and Soustelle carried out their fight—not without courage and not without self-sacrifice—to the end, to the point of absurdity. Those whom Jupiter wishes to lose he renders insane."[220]

[220] Jacques Dalloz, *Georges Bidault: Biographie politique*, Paris: Harmattan 1992, p. 426.

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